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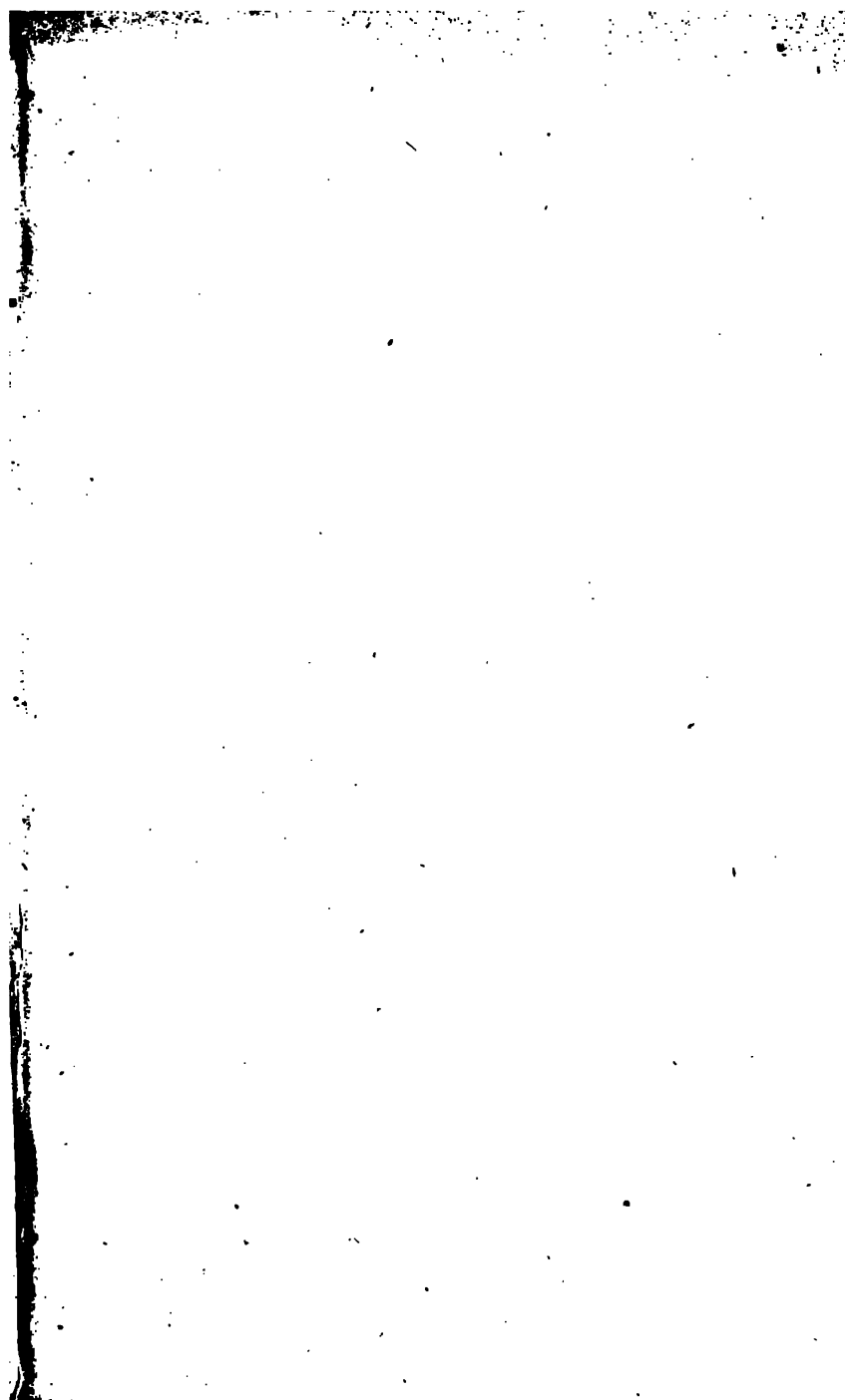
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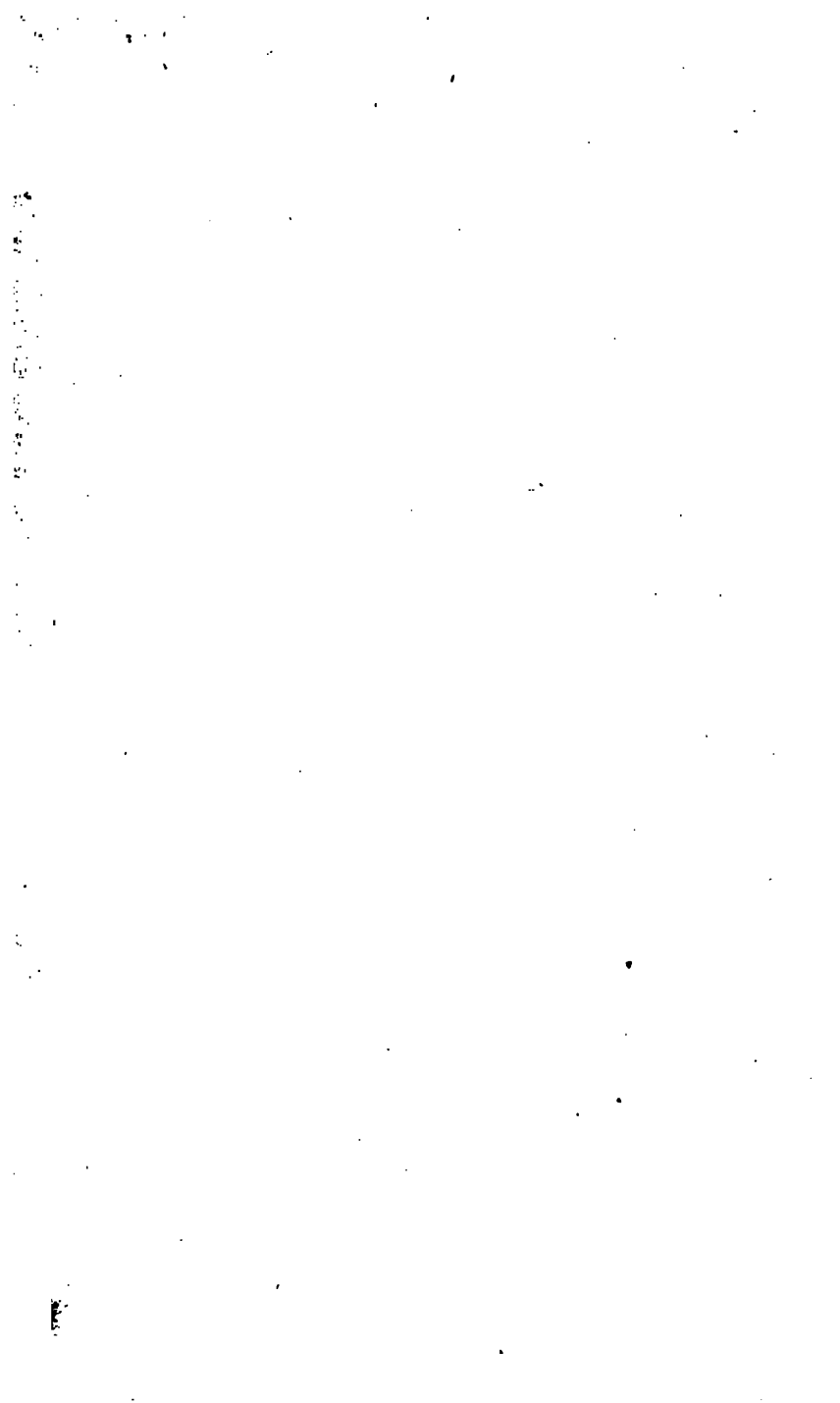
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TO HIS

P A R I S H I O N E R S.





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L E G A C Y  
TO HIS  
P A R I S H I O N E R S.

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By a MEMBER of the Society for promoting  
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

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## A LEGACY TO HIS PARISHIONERS

&c.

*My good Friends and Neighbours*

**I** leave with you this little Book, that when it shall please God to render me incapable of instructing you publickly, I may yet be serviceable in your private houses. Happy if I could foresee a certainty of your making use of it as occasions shall require, and especially on Sundays, when you have leisure for it, and when it is your duty to instruct your Families.

I have endeavour'd to explain the Church Catechism so as to render it intelligible to all of you, even those parts of it which treat of the Two Sacraments; but if you meet with some difficulties in them, you will impute it to the Nature of the Subjects; you will not be discouraged thereby, when you consider they are meerly to ascertain what are the real Properties of a Sacrament distinct from Rites of an inferior Order, and when these are establish'd you will proceed with pleasure to the Moral parts of them, which are plain, and easy.

In the next place having often found

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by Experience that many Children, nay even Adults, can readily repeat the Catechism without understanding it, and if you vary the Questions either in the Form of Words, or in the Course of them, they are instantly at a Loss; I have drawn up a Method of Examination, the use of which you will soon see. It is a string of Questions which you should put to them after they have been taught to repeat it as usual. I have not added Answers to them, for that would not remedy the Evil I complain of; but I refer you to such parts of the Lectures as treat of those Matters which the Questions lead to. Thus when at any Question you see a Letter prefixed as a, or b, you must look to the same letter in the several Lectures.

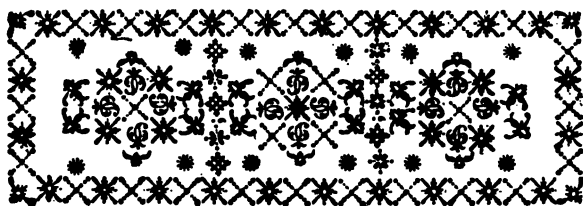
By this Means, I hope, you yourselves, as well as those you are to instruct, will soon understand every part of the Catechism, and become prepared for Confirmation. The Nature of this Rite also I have explained in an easy, and familiar Manner; And to this have added a Discourse on our Obligations to perform all our religious Engagements, of what Kind soever.

I pray God to bless it to your Benefit, to accept this my humble Endeavour in his Service, and to forgive all our Defects for Jesus Christ his sake.

I am

Yours &c.

LECTURES ON THE  
CHURCH CATECHISM.



## LECTURE first.

St MATT. 28 19th. v.

*Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

**T**HESE are the words of the blessed JESUS, to the eleven Disciples who met him by his appointment at a mountain in Galilee; they contain his last instructions to them, and are the original Commission under which they, his successors, and we, who are theirs, claim Authority to preach, and to baptize,

To Teach signifies to preach the Gospel, and make Profelytes to it; and where the person to be initiated is of riper Age and Understanding, this teaching should preceed the act of Baptizing, that he may thoroughly understand the nature of that Religion he is thence forward to profess, and the obligations which commence upon the administration of that Rite,—

Rite. — So too as Infants, and Children, unable to judge for themselves, are charitably represented by their Sponsors, these Sponsors should consider what they in the Name of them engage for, and the Nature of those Professions, and Duties which they are afterwards to inculcate. This I am afraid is too much neglected, and that many wantonly engage for others who have never seriously considered what was promised for themselves; and this although the Church in Can. 29. requires that they should not only have been baptized, but should also have received the Lord's Supper.

These Evils, and very serious Evils they are, are owing to these two Causes. — Most Parents think they have sufficiently discharged their duty when once their Children can repeat the Catechism: And others, because it was imposed upon them in their younger years as a Task, think to look into it at a riper Age is going to School again: And thus *Both* being long accustomed to repeat it by Rote, without attending to the Sense of it, rest contented with that all their Lives after.

And here I cannot help lamenting a very great, and general Error in the Education of Children; the Catechism is almost the first thing  
put

put so them, and the next are the holy Scriptures: as if any Set of words would not teach them to spell, and any collection of little innocent tales invite them to read. Sure I am that no great good can accrue from teaching them to repeat the Catechism at an Age when they cannot understand it; and 'till they can be made to understand it is better postponed: and was the Bible to be thrown in their way when history begins to be entertaining, and never sooner; they would read it with pleasure, and that pleasure would increase with their years; but for want of this caution, this too like the Catechism is looked upon as a Task, and laid aside like the other the very day they leave School. — yet Surely it is necessary to know the will of God, and in order to it necessary to recur to that original Compact wherein it is explained, and our Obedience to it enforced,

This makes a Review of the Church Catechism at all times, and with all persons, highly necessary. I shall therefore in what follows attempt such an one of it as may not only be of use to yourselves, but to those also whom it is your duty to instruct.

But before I proceed it may not be amiss to obviate an Objection by which some are  
grossly

grossly misled. *It is that Infants are insensible of what is transacting at their being baptized, and therefore it would be better either to defer it till they come to years of Discretion, Or then to rebaptize them.*

Now as to the particular *Age* when it is proper to administer Baptism, since we have no express direction concerning it, our best way is to look out for something of a like nature, and observe the Rules prescribed in relation to that. Now a Rite of the like nature we have in *Circumcision*: this like Baptism was a foederal Rite, was instituted by God himself, and at the time of it's Institution made a necessary duty, as Baptism is made since: in short was that in the *Jewish* Religion which Baptism is in the *Christian*: And if it was, then surely such as were to be admitted to the one Rite, may be admitted to the other: but the Jews were commanded to circumcise their Children on the *Eighth* day, and they did it; our Saviour in obedience to the Law, which, till he entered professedly on his Ministry, continued in force, was himself circumcised on the *Eighth* day. And if so it is a plain case that Children may lawfully, nay ought to be, baptized in their *Infancy*.

Here

Here then is another Objection started. If it be so, how came the Apostles to say *repent, and be baptized*?—Mankind in Infancy cannot repent. I answer they neither can, nor need they to repent; and yet the Apostles did right to injoin Repentance. that is they did right in requiring it of those to whom they addressed themselves; but who were they? *Adults*, grown-up persons, persons who had committed actual Sins; an Infant has not; and the great necessity of Baptism to him is founded in the original Sentence of Death pronounced on Adam; and all his Descendents: this Sentence God is pleased to reverse upon our entering into a new Covenant with him; by which Covenant, *He* vouchsafes to remit that debt of Punishment, and restore the party to Immortality; and the *Infant* engages by its Sponsors to believe in him, and to serve him, when he shall become capable of so doing — This is all that is required of us in Infancy, in order to Baptism; but more than this is required of Adults, of such as the Apostles commanded first to *repent*: they had committed many Sins of which it was necessary they should repent, previously to this Act: but this Injunction by no means affects those who are baptized in their Infancy. This was nearly the Case of our blessed

ed Savior himself: he was baptized of John, but if Baptism be of no validity unless the Subject of it repents, why did he tell the Baptist *it behoved him thus to fulfill all Righteousness*? and why was He baptized who knew no Sin, and consequently could not repent? his perfect Innocence puts him with regard to Repentance on a Parellel with a Child in Infancy.

So much for the first part of the Objection. As to *rebaptizing Christians when they come to years of Discretion*, this is quite unnecessary, and if unnecessary is trifling and unpardonable. Now that it is unnecessary is evident from hence; Baptism is a Covenant, a solemn Agreement or Stipulation between *two parties*; and therefore this, like all other Covenants, if once entered into, and solemnly ratified, is indissoluble without the Consent of *both*: my executing the same Deed again and again doth not alter, nor increase the Obligation of it; I still stand bound by what I did a twelvemonth ago, as much as by what I did yesterday: and thus the Covenant I entered into at my Baptism in Infancy binds me to the End of my days: It was a Contract not for a few years of my Life, but for the whole of it, nor can any thing I do afterwards strengthen

the Obligation of it, or make the least Alteration. — Surely therefore all persons may be very well satisfied with what was done for them by their Sponsors at Baptism, at least with what they do for themselves at being confirmed many Years after.

As I am led to this Subject I am not willing to dismiss it 'till I have cleared it to your Satisfaction; let us therefore examine a Text or two brought in Support of the Objection. Our Savior saith to Nicodemus, *except a man be born anew of water and the holy Ghost; and again in another place, except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* But here you must observe that our Savior is speaking to a Jew, to one who had not been baptized; all therefore which was intended in these Expressions is, that in order to enter into the kingdom of God there must be an intire Change of his former Opinions and Practices: that he must undergo as great an Alteration as if he was to enter a second time into his Mother's Womb, and be born.— here too you should be told that by the *kingdom of God* is not meant the *kingdom of Heaven*, but that Spiritual kingdom which Christ was then to establish, that is the Christian Church; and hence it is plain that nothing said or applied

applied to Nicodemus, as a Jew, can have any relation to, or at all affect those, who have been baptized into Christ.

Neither again can any Argument for it be drawn from the Example of *Jesus* who was baptized of John; for he had not been baptized before. He had been circumcised, and was obedient to the Law of Moses 'till that Instant: he was now to begin his Ministry, and to introduce another, and a better Religion; and as Baptism was to be the initiatory Rite, or Method of Admission into it, he began with it himself. Nothing therefore can be collected from this Example more than the Necessity of being baptized *Once*, but it affords not the least Shadow of a Reason for doing it more than once.

Indeed I know no one Passage in all the *New Testament* that gives any Countenance to such a Practice, and but One in the *Old*; and this is a Circumstance mentioned by Joshua C. 5. v. 2d. *At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, make thee sharp Knives and circumcise again the Children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp Knives and circumcised the Children of Israel.* From hence some have advanced that if Circumcision be a Rite corresponding with

our Baptism, if the one was to be repeated, and that by the express command of God, the other also should be repeated. But here we see how necessary it is to study the Scriptures, or to consult those who do; to compare Scripture with Scripture, and to learn the Writer's Meaning from himself, and not our own Prejudices; not to take it in detached Sentences, but ingenuously to examine what goes before, and follows. If this were done many Passages that are woe-fully misconstrued would be understood, and the Spirit of Delusion put to flight. In the Case before us how differently does it appear when we hear the whole Account of it! the words are these. *And this is the Cause why Joshua did circumcise; All the people that came out of Egypt that were Males, even all the Men of War, died in the Wilderneys by the way after they came out of Egypt. Now all the people that came out were circumcised, but all the people that were born in the Wilderneys by the way as they came forth out of Egypt them they had not circumcised: For the Children of Israel walked forty years in the Wilderneys till all the people that were Men of War which came out of Egypt were consumed because they obey'd not the voice of the Lord, unto whom the Lord sware he would not shew them the Land which the Lord sware unto their Fa-  
thers*

*Fathers that he would give them, a Land that floweth with Milk and Honey. And their Children which he raised up in their stead Them Joshua circumcised; For they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the Way.*— This is the only Passage that seems to countenance Rebaptizing; and this is so far from countenancing it, that it does effectually, and beyond all Contradiction confute it.

This being premised I proceed to explain the Church Catechism. But first I must inform you that Baptism in the begining of the Catechism is not treated of as a *Sacrament*, but meerly as our *Admission into the Christian Church*; It is considered as a Sacrament in the latter part of it, as you will see hereafter. At present you are to look upon it only as an Entrance into Christ's Church, and setting forth to us the Terms of the New Covenant between God, and Man.

It begins with this Question, *What is your Name?* Every Man has two Names his *Christian Name*, and his *Sirname*. His Sirname he derives from his Parents at his Birth; the other he assumes afterwards upon being Baptized<sup>a</sup>. What particular Name it has pleased our Parents or others to give us at Baptism, is no material part of the Institution:  
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but the Church for good and wise reasons bids us repeat it: for instance whatever it be it was given me at my Baptism, when I was made a Christian, and therefore called my Christian Name <sup>b</sup>. Whenever therefore I hear, or repeat it, It should remind me of my Profession, remind me of my Duty, and never fail to suggest that the mention of it is the greatest Reproach to me, unless I answer the Character which it denotes; that is, unless I act up to it, and be a Christian in Life, as well as in Name <sup>c</sup>.

The next Question is. *Who gave you this Name?* The Answer is *my Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism* <sup>d</sup>. These do more than meerly give us our Name, they engage to see us act agreeably to it: they are to remind us whenever they observe us deviating from it: they are to teach us all things which a Christian ought to know and believe; they are to call upon us to practice them: And this care of theirs ceases not till we have discharged them of it, which cannot be before Confirmation, and does hardly cease then: they are therefore bound to see us confirmed, and cannot be thought to exceed their Commission, if they afterwards remind us of our solemn Vows at that time.—  
What a shame is it then to engage for all  
this

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this in the Church, in the sight of God and his people, and pay no more regard to it than if the whole was a meer piece of Mockery, an human Soul of no Estimation, and our Promises to God never to be required at our hands!

But to proceed. In baptism *wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven*.

In order to understand this aright you are to consider that by the disobedience of *Adam Sin came upon all, and Death by Sin*: we had forfeited our Title to Immortality, and no hopes of Existence beyond the Grave remained. Under this forlorn Condition all his Descendents continued 'till it pleased God to select from the rest of Mankind a peculiar people with whom he entered into a Covenant of Reconciliation; of which Covenant Circumcision was the Sign: and this Covenant continued untill the coming of Christ, when it expired, and a new one was published in it's stead; not confined as the former was to a particular people, but offered alike to all Nations; In this Baptism took the place which Circumcision had in the other; we are admitted to it through this Means; and at our Admission God engages for certain things  
on

on His part, and We for certain things on Our's. Both these Engagements are explained in the Catechism.

The first thing granted by God is *that we are hereby made Members of Christ.*

This is a figurative Expression taken from an human Body, and signifies that by Baptism *we are made One with Christ, and Christ with us,* are united to him as our Head; and whereas in consequence of Adam's Transgression we were like Branches lopped off from the Mother-Tree, we are by Baptism ingrafted, and again receive Nutri-ment from it <sup>f</sup>.

This reminds us of the Honor due to Christ as the Head over all things, and teaches us that we must pay the same Obedience to him that the Members of the Body pay to that which actuates them:— That as every Member of the natural Body is serviceable to all the rest, so all Christians must do charitable and beneficent Acts to one another. We are Brethren, and should have a fellow feeling in each other's Pleasures and Pains, as to abide by the Apostle's Metaphor *if one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it; Or one Member be honoured all the Mem-  
bers*

*members rejoice with it &c.*

*The Second is that we are made the Children of God.*

His Children we were before Baptism, but not in the Sense we are after it: for tho' we were the Work of his hands, we had forfeited his Favor, and were, to speak familiarly, disinherited. But in Baptism he is graciously reconciled to us through his blessed Son, restores to us the light of his Countenance, and makes us to become *joint-Heirs with Christ* <sup>h</sup>.

And what doth this teach us, but that our Behavior must be suitable to the relation we stand in; that as we are the Children of God, we must pay him the Obedience due to a Father; for otherwise this Privilege, the most glorious and beneficial we have, will the more discover our Unworthiness of it, and bring on our Condemnation, instead of preventing it <sup>i</sup>.

*The third is that we are made Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

In an unredeemed State we are all Sinners; *the whole World saith the Apostle*  
C *lieth*

*lieth in Wickedness, and the Wages of Sin is Death. But in Baptism we triumph over the Grave, and are not only restored to Immortality, but are farther assured we shall possess it in the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ will make us fellow-citizens with the Saints, and raise us to an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not, reserved in Heaven for us<sup>k</sup>.*

And what doth this notify, but that all our thoughts and desires should tend to that place, that *where our treasure is, there should be our hearts*; that we are but Strangers and Pilgrims, and therefore should look forward to our journey's End: that though we must have our hour upon the Stage of this Life, we have another coming, that is far more desirèable, and therefore should have our *Conversation in Heaven<sup>l</sup>*.

*These are the Benefits which God offers, and engages to grant on his part; but in order to be intitled to them, We must also perform our part of the Contract. What that is, is explained in the Answer to the next Question, viz. What did your Godfathers, and Godmothers then for you?*

*They did promise and vow three things in my Name, — the first is that I should renounce the*

*the Devil and all his works, the Poms and vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh<sup>m</sup>.*

By the Devil and all his Works is meant all kinds of wickedness, such especially as most partake of the Nature of that cursed Being, such as lying, of which he is the Father, Murder, Pride, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, Covetousness, Idolatry, and the like. By the Poms of the World are to be understood vitious Customs and Fashions, Ambition, Ostentation, and all such Entertainments and Pleasures as captivate the Mind, debase and cause it to neglect worthier Objects. — By the Vanities of it are intended Riches unjustly gotten, or profusely squandered away; all things in short that court the present Hour only, and lull and deceive us 'till we stand amazed at our last. — By all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh are meant Fornication, Adultery, Obscenity; in a word all uncleanness, whether in our Actions, Words, or Thoughts<sup>n</sup>.

This is the First of the three things promised for us by our Sponsors, the Second is, *That we will believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith<sup>o</sup>.*

What these are will come in Course to be explained when we rehearse the Articles  
C 2 of

of our Belief, and 'till then we wave them, The Third is *that we will keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our Life* P.

These too shall be waved at present and all the Remark I shall make on this part of the Covenant is, that we promise to walk in the same *all the Days of our Life*. We engage not for a year or two, but for our whole Life; and we shall do well to remember what the Apostle tells us, *It is better not to have known the way of righteousness than after we have known, it to depart from it*: and again, *No man taking hold of the Plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God*. Our Obedience to these Commandments therefore must be uniform, and must be permanent q,

These things being promised for us by our Sponsors, there follows a very interesting, and important Question; *Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do as they have promised for thee?* to which you reply *Yes verily*. But why so? no one has a Right to engage for me without my Consent; this is a breach of natural Liberty; whatever was undertaken for me in my Infancy I have a Right to consider at a riper Age; if I approve of it then, well;

well; if not, I am at Liberty to reject, and refuse it. All this is true, and yet every man is bound to do what his Godfathers and Godmothers promised he should, and is as much obliged by their promise, as if he had been of sufficient Age to understand what was doing, and had assented to every Article. But then this Obligation is founded not in any Promise made in his Name by them, but in the Nature of the things promised: as to believe in God, and to serve him; to be just to others, and to himself.—These are duties of general, and eternal Obligation, which therefore he must, and ought to perform, whether others had promised that he should perform them, or not. So that the person catechised very rightly answers *Yes Verily* <sup>r</sup>.

He goes on, *And by God's Grace so I will.*—This is well added, and teaches us, that without him we can do nothing; that *we are not sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.* And therefore he heartily thanks his heavenly Father, that he hath called him to this State of Salvation; which Salvation he acknowledges, as becomes him, is through *Jesus Christ, the only Name under heaven by which we can be saved.* Here too he remembers that the same  
Grace

Grace which called him at first, is necessary to his Perseverance; to guard him against the Temptations he is like to meet with, and the Disposition of his Nature to relapse: And therefore he *prays unto God to give him his Grace that he may continue in the same unto his Lifes End; being confident of this very thing, that he, who hath begun a good Work in him, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ<sup>s</sup>.*

Thus then we have a full View of the Covenant entered into at our Baptism; On one Side we are made *Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*: On the other; We are to *renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh*; Secondly to believe all the *Articles of the Christian Faith*; And Thirdly to keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of our Life. The first of these is already explained, and the second in the following Lecture.

## LECTURE second

## LECTURE second.

**W**E have already considered what our Godfathers and Godmothers promised for us; or what is *our* part of the Covenant entered into with God at our Baptism. It consists I told you of three things; the first is, *that we should renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms, and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the Sinful Lusts of the Flesh.* This part of our duty has been already explained.

The second is, *that we should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.* These Articles are briefly summed up in the Creed, or Belief<sup>a</sup>. It is commonly called the Apostle's Creed, not that it was drawn up by them, but because it contains their Doctrine, and is a Compendium of what the New Testament delivers down to us from them<sup>b</sup>. Hence it has its *Authority*. Its *Use* is to refresh the Memory, and enable it in few words to keep in Mind the most important principles of true Religion<sup>c</sup>. The Child therefore every time it is catechised is bidden to rehearse the Articles of his Belief

Belief. It consists of three parts <sup>d</sup>. And the first relates to God <sup>e</sup>. *I believe in God.*

To believe in God is to believe that there is a Being eternal and infinite, perfect and self sufficient; all powerful, and all wise; just and holy, merciful and good; whose Power created all things, whose Providence sustains them, and *whose kingdom ruleth over all.* It signifies that there is *but one* God, agreeably to the declarations of holy Scripture; *the Lord he is God, there is none else beside him;* and again, *to us there is but one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

He is described under the appellation of *The Father*, first, as he is the Author and Original Giver of Life to all Beings in the Universe, of *whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named.* And secondly to denote his parental Affection, his Grace and Mercy towards all his Creatures; And lastly, as he is in a peculiar Manner the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is styled *Almighty*, because of *him and to him and through him are all things.* And we are told that before the Consummation of earthly things, and the Commencement of another

another endless and unchangeable State, the Son himself, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, *shall deliver up to his Father all Rule and all Authority, and Power, that had been delegated to him by the Father, that God may be all in all.*

He is said to be *the Maker of Heaven and Earth*; that whereas in times of Ignorance Men worshipped the Host of Heaven, the Sun, and the Moon, imagining them to be intelligent Beings, and ruling over all Earthly things, they should now acknowledge them to be the works of his Fingers, directed, and controuled by his Will, and objects of their Admiration, but not of their Worship. This is the first part of the Creed.

The second relates to God the Son <sup>f</sup>. *And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.* This very rightly follows the former, *Ye believe in God*, said our blessed Savior, *believe also in Me.* The first of these is the Foundation of Religion in General; the other of a particular one instituted by Christ.

We are to believe in *him* First as JESUS, as the person *so named of the Angel before he was conceived in the Womb*; as the person who properly is what his Name  
D signifies

signifies, the SAVIOR. And he is the Savior by *making himself an Offering for our Sins, and appearing in the presence of God to make Intercession for us.*

We are to believe in him Secondly as **CHRIST**, as the person *anointed to preach the Gospel, to be our King and Prophet, and the Author of everlasting Salvation to all that obey him.*

We are to believe in him Thirdly as *the only Son of God; as a person far above all Principalities, and Powers, above Thrones and Dominions and every Name that is named, being made so much better than the Angels as he hath by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they; for unto which of the Angels said he at any time Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And when God bringeth in this his begotten Son into the World he saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him.*

And Fourthly as our LORD: as him whom God hath given to be *the Head over all things, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.*

The next thing we profess to believe is  
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that he was *conceived of the holy Ghost*. That is that his Conception was miraculous, and that, altho' he took upon him the Nature of Man he was yet *conceived without Sin*.

*And born of the Virgin Mary*. This is mentioned to ascertain his Genealogy, and to shew that he was *born of the House and Lineage of David* as foretold in the Scriptures. The Conception, and being born of a Virgin is that *mystery of Godliness* which will be unravelled hereafter; which we believe at present upon the Authority of the divine Word, and into which, 'till we are more perfect, it becomes us not to pry farther.

*Suffered under Pontius Pilate*. That the Messiah should suffer is plain from many of the legal Institutions which were Types of him — from thence it was easily collected that *without shedding of Blood there could be no Remission of Sins*. It is further, and more expressly declared by the Prophet-Isaiah that he should suffer. How, and in what Manner he suffered is set forth hereafter, but we have first a particular Circumstance, which is that he *suffered under Pontius Pilate*. This Circumstance was inserted in the Creed for many good Reasons; among others it determines the time when he suffered: and

shews that it corresponded exactly with several Prophecies, especially *Daniel's*, and a very antient one in the first Book of Moses which says *that the Sceptre shall not depart from Judah untill Shiloh come*. Pontius Pilate was the Roman Governor of Judæa, and consequently at that time the Sceptre was departed from it — from hence too it appears that he suffered at the Expiration of *Daniel's Weeks*: The time from whence that Calculation proceeds is very well known; and it appears, recourse being had to the Records which were kept at Rome, and preserved the Acts of it's Governors in different Provinces, that when Daniel's Weeks concluded Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judæa, and that during his Administration *Jesus Christ* was crucified,

Thus having established that he suffered, we next particularize the Manner of it, And first we say *he was crucified*. Crucifixion was a Roman Punishment, inflicted upon none but the vilest Malefactors; It was also a most painful, and most tedious Death. This Circumstance of his Suffering is added not only to remind us of the exceeding Malignity of Sin, and the greatness of his Mercy towards us; but also to point out the completion of two extraordinary Prophecies:  
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*the one is that he should be lifted up as the serpent in the Wilderness; and the other that he should make his Grave with the wicked.*

The next Article is *That he was dead.* This was added to oppose an erroneous Opinion that our blessed Savior suffered in Appearance only; but it is plain he did really die: this is evident from the Blood and Water that issued from his Side, which could not be in a living Subject; and likewise from the Testimony of his Executioners who brake the Legs of the two Thieves crucified with him to put an End to the Remains of Life in them; but did not break his, *because that he was dead already.*

It follows *and was buried.* Which is a Confirmation of the preceeding Article, and by the Circumstance of *Joseph's* begging the Body, a rich and honorable Man of *Arithmathea*, and his depositing it in a new Tomb, which he had lately made for himself, literally fulfilled the remaining part of *Isaiah's* Prophecy; that as in his Crucifixion *he made his Grave with the wicked; he made it with the rich in his Death.*

The next Article is *He descended into Hell.* Of this various Senses have been given, some have

have thought that he really suffered the Torments of the damned: but this cannot be: he could not possibly despair of the favour of God, and therefore could not feel *that worm which never dieth*.—Neither can it mean that he descended thither to bring others from it; for the wicked according to express declarations in Scripture are not to be delivered at all.—Nor again are we to understand by it that he went to triumph over the Devil; for the only kingdom the Devil has is in this World; and here Christ effectually triumphs over him by destroying Sin, which is his Dominion.—It is said in the preceeding Article that he was buried, and therefore in this it must mean something more than merely descending into the lower parts of the Earth; the true meaning therefore is that as his Body was actually buried, so his Soul was actually departed from it; and it was inserted to silence some Heretics who to destroy the Credit of his Resurrection pretended that he was never really dead. The Article therefore asserts that he descended into Hell: and Hell in the original word here used signifies not a place of Torments, but the invisible place of departed Spirits, in which all remain from the End of this Life, 'till the Commencement

## Commencement of another at the day of Judgement.

Thus far we have seen what is properly his *Humiliation*; his disrobing himself of Glory, his Incarnation, his sufferings, his Death, and his Burial; and are now to turn our Eyes to a Scene more joyful. Proceed we therefore to his *Exaltation*. *The third day he rose again from the Dead*. He had by his Death satisfied the Justice of God, and was now to become the *First Fruits of them that slept*: he was crucified on the Friday, lay in the Grave the remaining part of that day, the whole of the next, and arose on the third: and therefore in the Language of the Jews and other Nations is said to have lain in the Grave *Three days*. He lay so long to leave no Room for any one to doubt his being dead; and he lay no longer, that his Body agreeably to the Psalmist's prediction *might not see corruption*. He arose on the first day of the Week, the day after the Jewish Sabbath; on which Account it is that whereas they religiously observed the seventh in Commemoration of God's resting from the works of Creation, we observe the first in remembrance of a greater Blessing derived to Mankind by the Resurrection of Christ.

The Intention of our Lords Resurrection  
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was to declare his Victory over Death: *Death has no more Dominion over him, for in that he died, he died unto Sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. And God hereby begets us unto a lively Hope, and assures us that if we be planted in the likeness of his Death, we shall be also in the likeness of his Resurrection: that is if we become dead unto Sin, crucify our Old Man, and continually mortify all our evil and corrupt Affections, he, who raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal Bodies.*

The Consequence of his Resurrection is *that he ascended into Heaven.* As the Jewish High Priest, after he had offered for the Sins of the whole people, entered into the Holy of Holies, so our Savior who was typified in him, after he had sacrificed himself for the Sins of the whole World, ascended into Heaven. And great Comfort does this afford all Christians, for what doeth he in Heaven but present his meritorious Oblation, and interceed for us. Neither have we in him an High Priest who cannot be touched with a Sense of our Infirmities, for he himself also was tempted; and *being made like unto us, Sin only excepted,* knoweth how to compassionate, as well as to succour us.

It follows in the Creed. *And sitteth on the Right*

*Right Hand of God.* That is he is admitted to a state of the highest Dignity, and Might: *All Power is given unto him in Heaven and in Earth.* Angels, Authorities, and Powers are made subject unto him: he is set far above all Principalities, and Powers, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named not only in this World, but in that which is to come: And the Throne of God, as St. John expresses it in the Revelations, is become the Throne of God, and of the Lamb.

From both these Articles it follows that he is the only Mediator between God and Man; *the only Mediator of the New Testament.* He hath purchased to himself a Church with his own Blood, and given himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from the Evils of this Life, and secure to us Bliss and Immortality in the next. And hence we see what Dishonor we do to him when with the *Papists* we join other Mediators with him, and give to Saints and Angels any share of that Worship which belongs to him solely.

After this follows another, and a very interesting Article, *From thence he shall come to judge the Quick and the Dead.*

The unequal Distribution of things in  
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this World leads us naturally to expect another in which this shall be adjusted: but Revelation confirms our Conjecture, and says expressly that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness; in which every man shall receive according to what he hath done in the Body, whether it be good, or whether it be Evil.—It also goes further and declares by whom this Judgment shall be administered, and names the Man Christ Jesus: Before him, it is said, shall be gathered all Nations, that he shall be revealed from Heaven with the holy Angels in flaming Fire taking Vengeance on all that know not God, and obey not the Gospel: that he shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God: that all that are in the Grave shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil unto the Resurrection of Damnation.—Of that day, and of that Hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels that are in Heaven: It will come as a Thief in the Night; and as the Flood came upon the Old World, when they were Eating and drinking; so will the Coming of the Son of Man be unexpected, and sudden; for this Reason it is said to judge the Quick and the Dead, those  
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who have slept for Ages, and those who shall be alive at his coming.

The Consideration of this should make us tread cautiously every hour; every hour leads to our last, every hour may be our last; and as the next step to this is *Judgment*, let us always keep in Mind on what points chiefly that Judgment will turn: Now our blessed Savior has vouchsafed to tell us it will be chiefly on *Charity*: and by Charity we are to understand all those Properties which St. Paul ascribes to it in his first Epistle to the Corinthians; which therefore can never be too much consulted by us.

I have now explained the Articles contained in the first and second Parts of the Creed, which relate to God the Father, and God the Son, and pass on to the third which relates to God the Holy Ghost &c. and this begins.

*I believe in the Holy Ghost.*

That there are Three Persons in the God-head is the doctrine of the *Church of England*, and like every other which it professes is the doctrine of the *holy Scriptures*. That they exist together is certain, tho' the mode of that Existence does not fall within our present

Capacities: this is reserved for that time when *what we now see through a Glass darkly, shall be distinct Vision, and we shall know even as we are known.* At present it is an Object of Faith only, and rests upon an Authority supported by Testimonies which we cannot reject. This makes it *reasonable* to believe in this Article; as well as a *Duty*. And, as we are commanded to be baptized in the Name of the holy Ghost as well as of the Father and the Son, we can have no doubt but so far at least as they concern Christians *the Three Persons are Equal.*

The next thing we profess to believe in, is *The holy Catholic Church.* Now the holy Catholic Church signifies either all those who in this Life did their utmost to serve God, and now form *the general Assembly that are written in heaven;* Or the *Christian Church,* distinguished from the *Jewish.* The Jewish was confined to one people, distinct in this, as well as in their civil Polity, from all other Nations: the Christian comprehends the whole World, and will, we trust, before the general Consummation prevail over *all Nations, People, and Languages; and the Kingdoms of the World be one and all the Kingdom of Christ.*—Or according to others, it signifies that part of the universal Church which now exists, as distinguished from that which went  
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before, or shall come after it.—Or, lastly, and which indeed is the best Sense, that which is visible upon Earth, in an outward Profession of the Gospel of Christ, and an external Communion of the Word and Sacraments.

The next Article is *The Communion of Saints*. This too has been considered in several Senses; the best, and most usually received, is that they are the Members of Christ, united to him as their Head, and governed by the same Laws; so that in the Language of the holy Scriptures *they being many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another*: consequently it must be the duty of all Christians to keep this unity in the bond of Peace, to unite in a Fellowship of Love and Charity, mutually to assist, comfort, and instruct one another; and in short to *love as Brethren, having one Mind, and one Mouth, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven, them.*

When in the next Place we say, we believe in *the Forgiveness of sins*, we mean that till our blessed Savior came to deliver us from it, we were all under the Dominion of Death, and that through his Merits only, we are rescued from it. And this should remind us of the duties which he requires

requires of us previously to this Rescue ; which are to be baptized in his Name, to perform the promises made at our Baptism, and whenever we shall have broken those promises, to return to them with true Repentance, and steady Resolutions to observe them for the future.

And this leads me to the next Article. *The Resurrection of the Body.* This is added, because tho' before Christianity many from observing the natural Powers of the *Soul* were able to collect it's Immortality, no one ever conceived the like of the *Body* : that was seen to die, to decay, to dissolve, that it shall hereafter arise, and once more unite with the Soul is the doctrine of Christianity only, had been deemed impossible but that it was effected in the Person of Christ, and could never have been looked upon as what shall happen in Our's if he had not said, *Because I live ye shall live also.* He arose from the dead to give an irresistible Testimony to the truth of his Doctrines, as well as his Divinity ; and thereby we are assured that *when Christ who is our Life shall appear, we also shall appear with him.*

And now comes the last of these Articles *And the Life Everlasting.* It is placed the last, and follows the Resurrection of the Body, for this

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this reason, that tho' it is possible both the Punishments of the wicked, and the Rewards of good Men, may in some degree commence from the Article of *Death*; the one in the expectation of severe Torments at hand; the other in the comfortable Assurance of approaching Felicity, yet the Consummation of neither will be till the general *Resurrection*. But the principal thing we are to regard in this Article is the Word *everlasting*, Whatever be the Punishment of the wicked, or the Reward of good Men, both, we are told, in Scripture will be everlasting.—What then are the pleasures of Sin that for these which last but for a Moment we subject ourselves to Misery without End; Or what the little difficulties in our Warfare against it, when for these we shall be crowned with Happiness eternal!

I have now gone thro' the several *Articles of the Christian Faith*, and am next as a Catechist to ask *what dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?* to which you answer *First I learn to believe in God the Father who hath made me, and all the world; Secondly in God the Son who hath redeemed me, and all Mankind; and Thirdly in God the holy Ghost who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.* This Answer which is prepared to your Hands will enable you to recollect them,  
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and the oftner you recollect them, the more you will understand, and profit by them <sup>h</sup>.

I should now proceed to the second thing promised for us at our Baptism which is *that we should keep God's holy will and Commandments*; but this we postpone. At present I would recommend to you as a proper Conclusion of this Lecture that you be very cautious how you give Ear to those who would corrupt your Faith. There are many now a days and there have been, from the first preaching of Christianity, many, who would *turn aside, if it were possible, the very Elect*: beware of them, and *hold fast the Profession of your Faith without wavering*. Your Belief or Creed is the *Form of sound words delivered to the saints*: whenever you repeat it therefore beg of God to *continue you in this Faith*: and I cannot recommend to you a better Form than that which *St. Thomas made use of, Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief*.

LECTURE, Third.

## LECTURE third.

WE are now advanced to the third thing promised in our Name at being baptized; namely *that we should keep God's holy will and Commandments*. These Commandments are *Tèn* as set forth in the 20th. C. Of *Exodus* <sup>a</sup>, and may either be considered as contained in *two Tables* in the form they were delivered to *Moses* <sup>b</sup>; Or as they have *two principal Objects*; our Duty towards God, and our Duty towards our Neighbor. The first Table, or the first four Commandments; relate to God; and the Second, or the remaining Six, to our Neighbor <sup>c</sup>.

They were delivered to Moses and from him to the Children of Israel; but they are nevertheless binding to *us*, because they are of a *Moral Nature*; and whatever is such, whether the Precept of an Heathen, or the Religion of a Jew, our Savior *came not to destroy, but to fulfill*.

The First of these Commandments comprehends principally these two doctrines, *That there is a God*, and *that there is but one* <sup>d</sup>.

That there is a God, is manifest from the  
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Light of Nature: The Beauty, the Order, the Harmony, the great Wisdom in accommodating every thing to Itself, and others, do with irresistible Force make us see, and acknowledge this Truth. — That there is but One too appears from that Simplicity, and Uniformity of Design, which are manifest in the whole of his Work. — But we need not trust to the Light of Nature, and Reason; for tho' these would satisfy most Minds, Revelation must satisfy all. To your *Bible* I send you, better far than all other Oracles; hear *that*, and it will tell you that *We all are his Offspring*; and *that the Lord he is God, and that there is none beside him.*

This Commandment therefore forbids all Idolatry, confines our worship to the true God, and as it condemns the Atheist who believes, or rather pretends to believe in *none*, so it condemns those who worship *more than one*. Of this kind are all those who like *antient Rome* fall down to the Stock of a Tree, and those who like *modern Rome* worship Saints and Angels, the Virgin Mary, and Relics. In this view of the Commandment therefore we who are *Protestants*, that is, we who are of the reformed Church, broken loose from the Errors and Corruptions of Popery, are but little concerned. But there is the *Spirit*, as well as the

the *Letter* : and every one of us should consider whether this Belief of ours has been, and is succeeded by a suitable Practice : for Instance, I have not disbelieved the Being of God ;—I have not paid Adoration to any other. — But have I paid Adoration to Him ? have I served, have I worshiped, have I loved that One ? have I done it *with all my Heart, with all my Mind, with all my Soul, and with all my Strength* ? have I not suffered the pleasures of the World to step in between me and him ? have I not *trusted in Man* for Defence, and set aside my Maker, to pay Court to him ? have I not been more afraid to lose a Great man's Favor than his ; and rashly adventured to make what I knew my Duty give place to Interest ? have I never robbed him of his due Honor, and flushed with success been tempted to think, and rash enough almost to say ; *By my Strength, and Cunning, and by the Power of my hands have I done this ?*

All these, and more Reflections arise from this Commandment, and shew plainly that merely to believe there is a God, while that Belief operates not on our Practice, leaves us little better than Atheists ; is not half of what is required, and therefore cannot possibly save us,

As the First Commandment prohibits the Worship of any *false* God, the Design of the Second is to prevent our worshiping the *true* in a wrong, and improper Manner<sup>c</sup>. God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in Spirit, and in Truth. All Representations of him by sensible Objects derogate from *his* Nature, and debase *our's*. But in this respect also we Protestants are not at first view concerned. I drop it therefore to make room for one or two observations necessary for your instruction. There are several Passages in the Commandment which are generally misunderstood; these therefore I shall endeavour to explain.

The first of these is, *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God*. Now we are not to understand that kind of Jealousy which we see in earthly Princes: In them it arises from the Possibility, that their Authority may suffer Diminution. But this cannot happen to God; we cannot profit, nor hurt him; and therefore he cannot in that sense be said to be jealous. No, he is jealous for *our* sakes, not *his own*: jealous, least as Idolatry naturally leads to other, and many Immoralities, withdraws us from true Virtue and Holiness, and betrays us into vile superstitions, we should, by giving the Honor due to him to graven Images, and other Representations, to Pictures, and Relicks,

Relicts, have our notions corrupted, and our wills and affections diverted from the best and noblest, to the worst and most unworthy of all Objects.

The next Expression that seems to need Explanation is this, *Visiting the sins of the Fathers upon the Children unto the third and fourth Generation.* This at first sight appears very contradictory to our notions of God, of whom we cannot help conceiving Ideas of infinite Justice, and infinite Mercy. And again it is directly contrary to his own Declarations by the Mouth of a Prophet ( see Ezek. C. 18 ) To remove therefore the wrong Impressions which this may possibly have made upon some weak and illiterate Persons, I must desire you to observe that the sentence is not compleat unless you add *of them that hate me*, or as it is in the Original *of them hating me*: continuing that is in their Fathers Sins, hating despising and disobeying me as they did. If the Children do this they are justly obnoxious to their Fathers Punishment, but where they act otherwise, they do not suffer for their Fathers Sins, they will be visited for their own only: agreeably to what we find in the Prophet above-mentioned, and particularly in these words, *the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, neither shall the Father bear the Iniquity of the Son; the Soul that sinneth It shall die.*

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This clears up the Sense of the Passage and prepares us to receive, and rely on the next, *showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my Commandments.*—— What an amiable Impression doth this leave upon us, and what an Idea doth it give of the divine Goodness and Mercy, which while his Justice extends in punishing no farther than the third or fourth Generation, protracts itself unto thousands in blessing.

This I think is all that is necessary to be said upon this Commandment, unless it be to propose a few sober Questions which it may not be amiss to put to Ourselves. As for Instance; It is true I do not represent God under sensible Images, and so far I do not transgress this Commandment; but do I not in mine own mind form wrong, and unbecoming conceptions of him? Or if I do not, farther than from the Nature of a finite Being, I cannot avoid; do I behave towards him agreeably to my conceptions? Do I always act as if in his Presence?— Do I always act as one persuaded that the wicked are an Abomination to him, and that the righteous only are his Delight?— Do I approach him with Reverence both in public and private?— Have I in all places, and at all hours an awful sense of his Majesty, and make it the study,  
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and Ambition of my Life to recommend myself to his Favor?

These, and many such Reflections will arise to us when we consider the second Commandment in it's due Latitude; but they must in great measure be left to ourselves.—I proceed therefore to explain to you the next.

This is intended to preserve in our minds a constant reverence for our Maker; that after we have been taught to acknowledge him to be God, and to worship him in a right manner, we should never mention his holy name without Honor: we are therefore to esteem it sacred, and religiously abstain from all Abuse, and Profanation of it<sup>f</sup>.

The first of these is prostituting it to the purposes of Deceit: the most flagrant of which is Perjury. The next is rash Swearing in common Conversation, carelessly and wantonly invoking the great God of Heaven upon every light and trivial Occasion.—A third is swearing by other things without mentioning *his* Name. This many look upon to be innocent; but I would have them observe two things; the one is that by this cautiousness it is plain they can forbear swearing if they will; the other is that swearing by any Creature is virtually swearing by the Creator:  
this

this our blessed Savior was pleased to declare and to explain upon the Mount. *Whoso sweareth by the Altar, sweareth by It, and all things thereon; And whoso sweareth by the Temple, sweareth by It, and by Him who dwelleth therein: And he that shall swear by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth Thereon. and therefore he gives us this Commandment, swear not at all.*

Next to swearing is prohibited that common, but diabolical Sin of Cursing: and let him who addicts himself to it recollect the following passages: let him look into them as he would into a Glasse, he will see his own Features in both. *He loveth not Blessing, therefore shall it be far from him: His delight is in Cursing, and it shall happen unto him: It shall be even as the Girdle that he is always girded withall.* That is, the Curse of God shall fall upon him, shall never depart from his house, but shall constantly pursue him to the end of this Life, and in that which is to come.

The next thing forbidden in the third Commandment is every kind of profane and blasphemous Talking. Many men who dare not be wicked in Deed, are abominably so in what they speak; but let all such remember what the Scriptures tell them: *by thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words thou shalt*

*shall be condemned:* let them hear farther what the Evangelist says, *every Idle Word which men shall speak they shall give account thereof at the day of Judgment.* And if this be true what must they expect who take every opportunity to ridicule God and Religion, to the scandal of all sober Christians, and indeed of common Sense!

The next thing necessary to mention is *making rash Imprecations, and Vows.* Whoever is guilty of this must be convinced that he prays for, or vows, either what is false, or unlawful; or what is vain, and unprofitable. He that is guilty of the first does the greatest despite to God, and Religion he can possibly offer: he besides breaks in upon prior and unalterable obligations not to do, or wish done, the things he vows to do, or prays for. And he who commits the latter, vows, or prays out of meer wantonness: that is he makes God a Party in a matter so trifling, that were he to take the same liberty with a fellow creature he would get chastised for it.—Shameful thus to offend our Maker, our Redeemer, and our Judge; while we are kept in awe by one another, *by a Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm!*

But if none of these Considerations will deter him, let him take warning by the example of  
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Jephtha, who by the rashness of his vow doomed his Daughter to Death, and himself to a Life of Misery: And also of the Jews, who by their Imprecation at the Condemnation of the Innocent Jesus when Pilate would have acquitted him, and delay'd to pass Sentence till he had washed his Hands and declared he was innocent of his Blood, cried out *his Blood be on us, and on our Children*. It fell on them, and their Posterity, and to this hour visibly pursues them with unremitted Severity.

I go on to the Fourth Commandment which is *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day* &c.

Of the Morality, and consequently of the Obligation to observe this Precept you must needs be convinced: for tho' the appointment of one Day in seven, or of any particular Day in preference to another, is meerly arbitrary, to be changed as Times and Circumstances shall require; or as it shall please the original Institutor to vary them; yet the nature of it is moral, the Duties it requires moral, and every man, at every Age, and in every Place, is bound to observe it.

It was at its first Institution given to the Jews: the intention of it is the same now, as it was before

before Christianity; to serve and worship God, to benefit ourselves, and others, in the noblest of instances, and to make all Creatures happy and at rest with mankind. The only difference is in the Day: the Jews observed it in commemoration of God's resting from his works, and therefore consecrated to it the *Seventh* Day of the Week  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; and we observe it, in remembrance of a greater Blessing derived to us by the Resurrection of Christ, on the *first*<sup>1</sup>. The *Morality* of it therefore both with respect to us and to them is apparent; and so will presently be the *Utility*, and *Advantages* of it,

Now such and so great are the Utility and Advantages of this Institution, that our Creator in injoining it gave the greatest instance of his universal Benevolence. For has he not by this provided, that amidst the fatigues both of Mind and Body which we all in some shape experience, there should be Time for Relaxation, a proper suspension of Labour, and a necessary recreation given to our wearied Faculties? To think, and to be wakeful, is needful; to sleep, and be secure, is as much so: see a man deprived of this, and you see an injured machine: keep the mind too long intent, and you find a Mad-man, or Idiot. On the contrary indulge him too long in Indolence and you find him enfeebled, and hurt. In no instance therefore are the Goodness and Wisdom of God

more apparent than in commanding the Sabbath, wherein so much Rest is given as is necessary for every good purpose, and not enough for a bad one.

Neither is this confined to *Ourselves*, but is extended even to *Brutes*, all such I mean as are employed in our immediate service. It is no fanciful conceit, nor any affectation of studied Refinement to insist that These too, if deprived of reasonable respite from Labour, would much sooner decay, would soon sink in value, and every man upon experience finds that to be a good Master to them is to be a good Steward to himself.

But this is not all the intention of God in this Precept: he means to teach us Mercy even unto Beasts; that we have a right to use the Creatures, but not to abuse them. And sure it goes farther, and tells us that if even these which in Pride we look upon as made, and fed, only for us; if these I say are entitled to so much compassion, it is still more out of character, and a much greater offence to deny it unto those whose nature is the same with our own, and who for the offices they perform under us, and from whom we derive half our Enjoyments, have a right to our Gratitude.

These are Reasons that both we, and our cattle should rest one day in seven; but there  
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are others beside, and of a kind so interesting that I hope it will be sufficient to name them. And the first is that unless we retire on the Sabbath from the Business, the Hurries, the Pleasures, and Impertinences of this Life, we have no time to think of, and prepare for the next: for it is with our spiritual concerns, as it is with our worldly; if the Man of Trade does not now and then take account of his Stock, examine, and set down his Dealings, compute his Losses, and his Gains, correct past Mistakes, and think upon a scheme to prevent future; the most inconsiderate Man living will tell you he will surely be ruined. The same is required in our spiritual concerns; but this cannot be done *every* day: indeed it can *then only* be done when we have no other Business, and all around, in like manner engaged with *themselves*, leave *us* disengaged, and at Leisure.

If Sundays therefore ought thus to be Seasons of *Rest*, and such excellent purposes are intended to be served by them, it behoves us to employ this Rest so as may best answer these purposes. We are therefore to keep the Sabbath *holy*; we are to rest, but it is from the Business of our ordinary Callings in order to perform greater, and more essential duties; to recollect ourselves, and our prospects; and cultivate an acquaintance with the perfectest Being: to praise him,  
to

to thank him, to pray to him both in public, and private; to converse with good Men, and good Books; to shew ourselves the Disciples of Christ, by loving those whom he loved, and shewing forth our Gratitude to him, by making them happy.

But this is not all, nor let any one think so: Thou thyself art enjoined this, and *so are thy Son, and thy Daughter, thy Man-servant and thy Maid-servant, and the Stranger within thy Gates.* All Parents, and Guardians; all Masters of Families, or Schools; all who have Influence from their Professions, Office, Situation, or Interest, must not only themselves perform these duties, but must endeavour to make others do the same. Nor let them despair of success in their endeavors; only let them take care to set the example, and they will soon see it followed, at least within their own Gates.

I should now proceed to the *second Table*, of that part of the Commandments which contain *our duty to our Neighbor*, but this I shall wave while I set before you a Review of a Sunday as is usually observed, to our shame be it spoken, in this *Christian Country*. Some are idly fantring in the Fields; others, which is most amazing Impudence, in the Streets, in the very Avenues to the House of God: Some are drinking

drinking at Alehouses, and, because that is not bad enough, gaming : Some are on the Road, taking Journeys which are not at all necessary, and might as well be postponed : Others, in defiance of all Laws human as well as divine, exercising their Trades, or locked up in shameful commerce with Mammon, and saying unto it *thou art my God*.

To check this in ourselves and others, let us not forget that the Sabbath is observed in remembrance of our Savior's Resurrection ; that his Resurrection is the forerunner, and assurance of Ours ; that the state which shall commence from that Instant will be happy, or miserable ; and this as we ourselves make it by our Behavior in this World, It may be most glorious ; but in our Road to it we have many Opponents, many Frailties and bad Tendencies, that arise from ourselves ; and many Impediments that we meet with from others : that therefore great Care, and great Caution are requisite ; and that since it is not possible to be always on our Guard, the place of Security is the place of Retirement : one half of our difficulties we by this may surmount ; we baffle Temptations by keeping out of their way ; and when we must come in sight of them, we meet them armed, and forewarned.— But do we *thus* attack them, or do they *thus* attack us, when we estimate neither their strength, nor  
our's ;

our's; when we will not give ourselves time to prepare for them; when we neither suspect danger abroad, nor seek the friendly Shelter at home? He who religiously keeps the Sabbath will be sheltered at home, and such Resolution, such Armour, will arise to him thence, that when the Avocations of business call him abroad, he will find his Feet to tread sure: the impressions of Religion will be a match for the World, and the seventh Day a security to the rest of the Week.

I might now proceed to shew the consequences of neglecting this Duty, but I am prevented in it by your own Reflections. Is it not the confession of half you see ruined, Is it not lamented by all you see executed, that they first forsook the Church on the Sabbath, and that then—**GOD FORSOOK THEM?**

## LECTURE Fourth.

## LECTURE Fourth.

I now proceed to explain the *second Table* of the Commandments. This contains *our Duty towards our Neighbor*, and sets out with this, *Honor thy Father and thy Mother*<sup>a</sup>.

Here it is observable That the Commandment begins where Nature itself does, for altho' Christianity doth inspire a *general Love* and good will, nay has bidden us *to honour all Men*, still it does not in the least abate of that kind of Honor which we pay our Parents above all others; they deserve, and justly claim it most. For this Reason, as well as others, it stands the first in this Table. Another is because it has a reward expressly annexed to it, which none of the rest has, *that thy days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*. A third is because there is something as it were divine in the object of it; for whereas not to commit Murder, Theft, Adultery, not to bear false witness, nor to covet, is said to be *virtuous*; to honour and obey our Parents is styled *pious*. A fourth is because Obedience to this includes Obedience to many others; for from hence we

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learn and are naturally led to apply it to other Relations, and to found in it the Basis of Government itself.

This being premised I will next consider how far the obligation of this Commandment extends. And first, to honour our Father and Mother requires of us to make them suitable returns of Love and Assistance, to respect their Authority, and to submit to it, to have in remembrance what they have done, and felt for us; that to their Care, under God, we owe our preservation in childhood, our maintenance and support in youth, our education, and establishment in life: that by their Instructions we have been guarded from Wickedness, by their Wisdom from Folly, by their Labour from Want, and by their Indulgence from Pain. In short that to them we are indebted for most of our present Enjoyments, and for our Capacity to encrease and enlarge them. One principal design of the Commandment therefore is to make us grateful; to make us study to give them as little Pain, and as much Pleasure as we can; to be a Comfort, and a Stay, and a Credit to them. He can never be said to obey this Commandment who either brings down their grey Hairs with Sorrow, or declines to rock their Cradle in age: In their Age we must support them, in their necessities relieve them; in their sickness cherish them; in their Lives bless them, as they

they have blessed us, and in their Graves weep over them.

And what if it should be the hard Fate of some to meet with Parents who neglect their duty to them, this cannot cancel theirs: we must submit not only *to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*, by this and this only we may hope that our days will be long, and that our Piety will return home to ourselves: experience will encourage us in the expectation; for how few undutiful Children do we see happy Parents, and how few do we meet with unhappy in their Children who were dutiful to their own!

But this Commandment is not confined to our natural Parents, but extends to many other Relations; such as to the King, the common Father of his Country; we are therefore to honour him, to serve him, and humbly obey him. It requires in the next place submission to Magistrates, to the Ministers of God's Word and Sacraments, to Guardians and Masters: farther it requires it towards all our Betters, and challenges Reverence to the Aged, Veneration to the Wise and Prudent, Respect and Deference to the rich and powerful, but more especially towards those, in whatever state they are placed, that excel us in Virtue, and set good Examples.

The next Commandment is *Thou shalt do no Murder* <sup>b</sup>.

The first and principal breach of this is wilfully destroying the Life of another; and it is forbidden first, because it is committing a Robbery on God, and taking away by Force what he only has a Right to dispose of: and secondly, because it is depriving another of the most valuable of human Possessions. For these reasons, as well as on account of the injury which Society receives in losing one of its Members, we find that God allow'd no satisfaction for the life of a Murderer: other Crimes might be commuted for by Sacrifice, and Retribution; other offenders might lay hold of the Altar, but the Murderer could be taken from thence. ( see Exod. 21. 14. ) By the Law of Nations too he was adjudged worthy of the greatest Punishment, no less than Life for Life. And so we find that when the Viper fastened on the Hand of *St. Paul* upon his coming ashore, the Barbarians instantly concluded that *no doubt he was a Murderer whom tho' he had escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffered not to live.*

Next to the Murder of another is forbidden *Self Murder*, the guilt of which arises from some of the Causes just mentioned; namely no one has a right to anticipate the call of God, or dispose

dispose of his Gift: and again no one is at liberty to withdraw himself from his Family, his Relations, his Neighbor, nor from the Public; all which are intitled to his help and assistance, and have an Interest and a Right in his Life.

Thus far the Commandment is founded in Morality and the common sense of mankind, and the letter of it marks the extent of it. But Christianity carries it farther, and we transgress it, tho' in a less, yet in a very culpable degree, whenever we injure, or give pain to another man's Person; whenever we tempt him to excesses that impair his Health, and shorten his Life; whenever we indulge in Luxury, and shorten our own. In short whenever we transgress the bounds of Temperance, and do not, far as in us lies, protect, preserve, and lengthen out both our own Life, and the Life of our Neighbor,

Thus much for the sixth Commandment, the next is, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery* °. The Crime here forbidden was punished even by Heathens with Death; and no wonder, for next to Murder this is the greatest injury we can do another. And as in Murder the injury is not confined meerly to the object, but spreads itself far and wide, so Adultery draws along with it a horrid train of Evils. It  
separates

separates the nearest Relations, destroys all Connections, and the best of Friendships, lays the foundation of inextricable confusions, implacable dissensions, occasions murders, and the most tragical Events, and poisons all that confidence in a genuine Issue that animates our endeavours to provide for it. Nor is this an evil of a private Nature; it destroys that sacred Cement that links us together in Amity, and is the very soul of Society. The Adulterer therefore is not an Enemy to one man, or two men, but to mankind in general. For this reason it is that by the Law of *Moses* both the Adulterer and Adulterers were sentenced to Death, and hence it comes to pass that in the Gospel it is positively declared *that Whoremongers and Adulterers God will Judge,— that the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of Judgement, but chiefly them that walk after the Flesh in the Lust of Uncleanness.— that because of these things cometh the Wrath of God upon mankind,— and again That no Whoremonger nor unclean Person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God.— And the Apostle repeats it with great earnestness, and solemnity, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

But as in the preceeding Commandment many lesser Crimes are prohibited besides the

the capital one which is Murder, so in this many are forbidden besides Adultery. Ye have heard, said our Savior, that *it was said by them of old time Thou shalt not commit Adultery. but I say unto you whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her hath committed Adultery with her in his heart.* We must therefore watch and correct our very Inclinations to this Vice, as the only means to preserve us from lesser Acts of Incontinence; for these also are forbidden as well as the other. These are base, and beastly; occasion Sickness and Infirmities; entail diseases on an innocent Posterity, and are certain Instruments to bring us to Poverty, and Disgrace. — Take heed therefore how you indulge a loose Desire, how you suffer it to stay a Moment with you: think not you may trifle with Virtue, the transition to Vice is easy, the partition between them not so strong as you think it. — Again as your Thoughts should be modest so should your Words: remember that your Bodies are the *Temples of the holy Ghost*, and your greatest glory to keep them under subjection; remember also that for *every idle word ye must give Account*; And these together will teach you to *walk honestly as in the Day, not in rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wantonness*, but, laying aside naughtiness and filthy speaking, to *possess your Vessel in Sanctification and Honor.*

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The Eighth Commandment is, *Thou shalt not Steal*<sup>d</sup>. The first thing forbidden in this Commandment is robbing by Violence. This by the Law of Nations is infamous, and to be punished with Death: the next is stealing by Fraud and Secrecy: and the reason for prohibiting both is that were they universally practiced there could be no Property, no Security, no Encouragement for honest Industry, no Peace, but the World would be a scene of general Rapine, Plunder, and Distress. Here too as in other Commandments the Prohibition extends to diverse Offences, which branch from the capital one, partake of it's Nature, and will share in its Punishment. Such are using false Weights and Measures; over-reaching in Bargains; taking Advantage of the Ignorance, the Foible, or Necessities of others. Such also is withholding from another what is justly his Due, tho' what he cannot legally recover; neglecting to pay our just Debts, or contracting more than we can reasonably hope, to discharge. He who does any of these, or things like them, steals; and so does he who, tho' he avoids transgressing the meer Letter of the Commandment, acts not up to the Spirit and Intention of it: the Intention of it is *that with the same Measure we would have our Neighbor mete to us, we mete to him*, that we guard and protect his Property, as we would have our  
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our own protected; and if perchance formerly we have any way injured it, that we make Retribution. All this is included in the commandment; *let him therefore that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is right, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

The man who from fear of Poverty, or which is oftener, if not always the Cause, from fear of application to far honest means, to Labour and Industry, suffers himself to be drawn into Theft, is sure to meet with Shame and Punishment here, and will never arrive at *that new Heaven, and new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.*

The Ninth Commandment is *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbor.*

This cannot be transgressed in its first and capital sense without Perjury; the Sinfulness of which has been already shewn in what was said on the Third, this Commandment therefore seems to intend and prevent a Crime different from it. It means after the three preceeding ones have guarded the *Life*, and *Property* of our Neighbor, to preserve in the next place his *Reputation*. Next to our Life and Property this is our most valuable Possession; if our Life depends not upon it, our Property oftentimes does; but where there is a true  
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sense of honour, this is even dearer than Life. He therefore who designedly blasts anothers good Name commits an Act of Cruelty, as well as Injustice; and the Criminality of it is encreased by his hurting another at the same time he doth, not serve himself by it; It is the Act of the *Devil*, the *grand Accuser*, as his name signifies: and this is the Sinfulness of it with regard to our *Neighbor*. With regard to *God*, it is assuming his Province; *Who art thou that judgest another's Servant? to his proper Master he standeth, or falleth*: we are not to condemn where the judgment is God's; nor pass a Censure on others till we have Authority for it. But what do we, when in private or public Converse we indulge in Slander and Backbiting, in Whisperings, and Misrepresentations? in evil Surmisings, and Ridicule?—Is this christian, think ye? is it even moral? No, it is neither of them. Let us not pretend to Humanity; that is too good natured to do it—let us not pretend to Religion; that detests it;—let us not pretend to good Breeding: that would blush at it;—let us not pretend to Wit; true Wit is above it. 'Tis, Tinsel, 'tis Trash; 'tis a littleness of Soul, 'tis a badness and depravity of Heart: and yet it poisons every conversation. But for God's sake let us put it away from us; we are not safe while this Spirit is abroad: we can have no Friendships, we can have

have no Neighborhood, we can have no Peace.

But here some will ask tho' I may not say what is *false* of my Neighbor, may I not speak what is *true*? No, you may not even do that, if that be against him. If you require of me why you must not, I answer because Charity, and this Commandment forbid it; Charity you will remember, *is kind, it thinketh no Evil*, much less doth it speak it: on the contrary *it covereth a Multitude of Sins*.

These are the Reasons that in the Levitical Law Moses enacted that none *should go up and down as a Tale bearer*; and that our blessed Savior upon the Mount gave us in Charge *to judge not that we be not judged*. — Let us learn therefore *to set a Watch before our Mouth, and to keep the Door of our Lips; to take heed to our Ways that we offend not with our Tongue*; and to have always imprinted on our memories what the Apostle says, *By thy Words thou shalt be justified, and by thy Words thou shalt be condemned*.

Thus much for the *Ninth* Commandment. The *Tenth* is given to enforce our Obedience to all the rest of *this* Table, for the *first* is not concerned in it<sup>f</sup>. It goes to the bottom of things, and begins, where all evil Actions begin, at the *Heart*. In order to prevent

such Actions, it corrects the Passions, and Appetites, the first Motives and Inclinations to them: without this human Nature is too corrupt, and irresolute, to withstand Temptation. If a Man will indulge himself in Hatred, and a Thirst for Revenge, he will soon, in spite of a Command to the contrary, be guilty of Murder:— if he will fan his Lust, and forbidden Desires, from committing Adultery in his heart, he will commit it in fact. If he covets the property of his Neighbor, he will by and by steal it.— If he views with jealous eyes his Estimation in Life, he will sacrifice Truth, and every thing virtuous, to detract from it.— But let him once learn the Art of Contentment, and that noble Mastery over himself which distinguishes human Kind from the Brutes, and is our best, and most eminent Character; and he will have no such Temptations.

This in general shews the Reasonableness, and Excellence of this Commandment, that brings up the rear, is a kind of pledge for all the rest, and must itself give way, before these can become ineffectual,

With respect to Particulars, it is calculated to promote the happiness of our *Neighbor*, and of *Ourselves*: of our Neighbor, because while we neither covet his Property, his Reputation, or Pleasures, we shall not endeavour to deprive him

him of any one of them. And with regard to Ourselves, because it will rid us of the most uneasy situation we can be placed in, a situation we resolve to dislike. Yet this is the situation of all who harbour the Monster Envy, draw invidious comparisons between what is, or might have been, and for Happiness look beyond Home.

The *Folly* of this one would think would be sufficient to preserve us from coveting; but if this cannot, the *Sinfulness* of it must. And can it but be sinful, as it is repining at Providence, and saying others have too much, while we have too little? — Is it not to put ourselves in the place of the Almighty, and to suppose that we see as far into the Reason and Justice of things, our own nature, and the nature of others, as he does who is infinite in Wisdom? Is it not in the last place the highest *Ingratitude*? for who is there that liveth, and doth not receive many blessings in this Life? blessings, which he doth not deserve, nor could procure for himself? Are they not all of God? Are they not all *his Boon who giveth freely all things, and upbraideth not.*

I have now gone through the Commandments, and I am sure I may affirm they are *none of them grievous*. On the contrary they are like every other thing which is required, or  
forbidden

forbidden by Christ, reasonable in themselves, pleasant in the performance, and productive both of private, and public Felicity. Very rightly therefore doth our Church teach us *to beg of God to write all these his Laws in our Hearts.* What they are I have endeavoured to explain to you, but you cannot wish a better summary of them than that which is prepared for you in the Catechism in the answers to these two questions, viz. *what is thy Duty towards God?* and *what is thy Duty towards thy Neighbor?* and I persuade myself you will want no encouragement to peruse them frequently, when I add, that he who will consider them with attention, cannot possibly be ignorant of his Duty to either Object. In short they are the clearest and the ablest Compendium of both I ever met with. To them therefore I must now leave you, and proceed in the course of these Lectures to explain the *Lord's Prayer.*

## LECTURE Fifth,

## LECTURE Fifth.

**W**E have now gone through the several parts of the *Christian Covenant*, what is engaged for on the side of God, and what on Our's: have seen *what it is to be made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven: And farther what it is to renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pumps and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh: to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, and to keep God's holy Will and Commandments.* And now it very rightly follows that we beg of God to enable us to perform these Duties. But first the Catechist reminds the young Christian *that he is not able to do these things of himself, nor to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve him, without his Grace, which Grace, he tells him, he must learn at all times to call for by diligent Prayer, and then bids him say the Lord's Prayer.*

And here it is necessary, as *St. Paul* says, that we *pray with the Understanding*, and that every one who makes use of the several Petitions contained in it, should know the Sense, and  
Intention

Intention of them, for otherwise our Prayer is meer jargon, and instead of an acceptable service becomes Abomination.

I now therefore proceed to explain these Petitions; but first it may be useful to make one or two Observations.

*Prayer* is a duty founded in Nature; For we feel a thousand Wants, and Infirmities; we find ourselves unable to supply, and correct them; yet they are supplied, and corrected; this makes us to look up to the Fountain of all Goodness, and Power; and at the same time it shews us whom we are to praise for past mercies, teaches us whom we are to pray to for future.

Secondly, as to the *Matter of our Prayers*. There is nothing requires our deliberation more than this. We really know not what to pray for: many things we take to be Blessings, which are in themselves, and in their end, Curses. Many things we look upon as innocent, which are really criminal. Others there are which, tho' indifferent to good and evil, are yet improper objects of our wishes. And lastly there are some we are inclined to ask, tho' we know them to be such.

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But our blessed Savior, the greatest Friend to human Nature that ever existed, has prevented us in all these Instances, and given us a Directory that points out to us what we should pray for, and what we should not pray for.

But supposing us right in the *matter* of our Prayers, we may nevertheless err in the *manner* of them. We may like the Scribes, Pharisees, Hypocrites, make longer Prayers than are decent; as if Heaven was to be won, with the length of them: or like some, who dissent from us, disdain to be confined to any set Form, and run into extempore effusions; as if we may approach our Maker without ceremony, and, tho' we would labour an Address to an earthly Prince, may neglect the manner in which we address God. But this too our blessed Savior has guarded against, by furnishing us with proper instructions *how*, as well as *for what*, we should pray. And therefore as the Disciple did wisely when he besought him in these words *Lord, teach us to pray*, so shall we do well to observe his Directions when he replied *after this manner pray ye*.

I go on then to explain the several Petitions in the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer, so called because it was composed by him for the use of his Disciples<sup>a</sup>, begins thus, *Our Father*  
 K . . . . . *which*

*which art in Heaven.* And hereby it directs us to the true and only object of our Devotion; from the Sun, and Moon, and all the host of heavenly bodies, from stocks and stones, from saints and angels, to him who created them all, whose servants they are, to God the Father almighty.

It reminds us secondly that he is our Father; the origin of our Being, the protector and preserver of it, the supply of our wants, our help in distress, our support in trouble, our friend and all gracious benefactor. This consideration fills us with Gratitude, and the next fills us with Awe; for who can address this universal Father which is in Heaven, and not recollect the infinite distance between him, and the greatest of Mortals? who but must think humbly of himself, and consider that he is but Dust and Ashes? that God is in Heaven, and he upon Earth? that therefore all the devotion he can possibly express in his words and actions, all the reverence he can shew in bodily worship, is due to him: that he is to approach him humbly, petition him on his knees, and call forth every power of Soul and Body in his service?

It reminds us further of that place to which we all aspire, and to have our conversation in Heaven: to separate ourselves as far as may be  
from

from the things of this Life, and set our affections upon things above.

The first Petition in the Lord's Prayer, thus understood, very naturally introduces the second, *hallowed be thy Name*. A due reflection on what went before will lead to this. Who can look up to God, and consider him as that benevolent, and beneficent Being, from whom we receive all we enjoy at present, and all we wish, and expect hereafter; as the Lord of Heaven, where he sits throned in majesty, and receives continual Praises from innumerable Angels, and Archangels, but must wish to join in their Hallelujahs? join with them *hereafter* we shall, and why not begin it *now*? gladly we catch the sound, and let us waft it to the end of the World! this and this only can give us a foretaste of future Beatitudes, and the more we hallow his holy name upon Earth, the more we shall rejoice in it in his glorious Kingdom.

And what doth this teach us but to mention his name with reverence, to honour him, and all that relates to him: not to profane the one, with swearing and cursing; nor the other, with jesting and light talking: but in all things approve ourselves the servants of him *whose name is holy,*  
 K 2 and

*and holiest of holies, and hallowed throughout the World.*

The next Petition is. *Thy Kingdom come.* After being ourselves convinced of the Glory due to God, we charitably pray that all Mankind may be the same; and we mean by it, that his religion may spread over the face of the whole Earth, and that all the kingdoms of the world be the kingdom of God, and his Christ. — Whoever therefore offers up this Petition, must remember that it is indispensably required of him to contribute all in his Power to this end; by setting an example of the christian Life, by instructing the ignorant, and reforming the sinner; by bringing into light those who sit in darkness; converting the Infidel, and untutored Indian; by uniting if possible all mankind in Love; bringing all without, into the Pale of, Christ's Church, and healing the Divisions among those who are of it: In short by propagating the Gospel both at home, and abroad, and letting our zeal in it keep pace with our Conquests, and other Connections. This is what is primarily signified in the Petition before us; and the next is, in the expression of our burial Service *that he would hasten his Kingdom:* that so when the end of Christ's coming shall thus  
be

be fulfilled, and his kingdom on Earth established, *we and all those who are departed this life may have our perfect consummation and blifs both in Body and Soul*, in the next; in that eternal kingdom prepared for his Servants *from the beginning of the World.*

*Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* Here we pray that our Obedience may be like that of the holy Angels—Their obedience is uniform, and it is absolute. Like it ours cannot be while we are conversant with an artful, and a wicked World; and are as much inferior to them in our Powers, as we are in our rank of Being: but as it is where our blessed Savior bids us *to be perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect*, so it is here; and all that is intended by it amounts to no more than this, that our obedience be as like that of the holy Angels as our nature will admit of; that we serve God *with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Strength.* Beyond this we cannot go, for if we did, we should cease to be Men, and commence at once Angels.—So too tho' we cannot, strictly speaking, be like him *who is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of changing;* yet we must endeavour after it as much as we can: we do not his will on Earth, as it is done in Heaven, while we serve him by Fits, and by Starts;

Starts: we must remember that what is our duty this minute, is our duty the next, and to the end of our Life: and as no Figure in nature pleases so much as a *Circle*, because it is uniform: so nothing recommends us both to God, and the World, so much as an uniform course of acting; it shews we act from Principle, not Caprice; that we do not set up *Baal* against the *Lord*, nor halt between *God*, and *Mammon*.

This therefore is what we are to understand by this Petition. The next is *Give us this Day our daily Bread*. This in the first place teaches us to moderate our appetites, and reduce our desires to an humble standard. *What we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithall we shall be cloathed*, is the concern of an Heathen, not a Christian; these are *his* principal goods, they are the least of *ours*: if these are not in his possession, he knoweth not where to expect them; we know it, and are sure to receive them. *He that cloatheth the Field, we know will cloath us: he that feedeth the Raven, will much more feed Man*. This petition therefore teaches us to rest upon his providence, which will never fail to bless our honest Industry, and to hear us when we pray with *Agur* that he would feed us with food convenient for us, and nothing more.

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It teaches further not to extend our solicitude, *to take no thought for the morrow*; it is enough we provide for to day, to morrow will be as to day— so too it cautions us against all immoderate wishes; not to ask for Wealth, or grandeur, or power, *to be cloathed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously*; but to confine our petitions to what is necessary for our present health and convenience.—And further it reminds us that so long as God supplies us with these, we have all that is requisite: This is not our resting place, we are but on the road; if we have sufficient to make that tolerably comfortable 'tis well, 'tis enough; we hope to pass over *Jordan*, and there to have our *Milk and Honey*; till then, so long as we have *Manna*, let us be content,

The next thing we pray for is the *Forgiveness of our Sins*. In many things we all offend, ( for who is there that liveth and fineth not ? ) and who without forgiveness can escape Punishment? To obtain this for us, our blessed Savior came upon Earth, suffered death upon the Cross, and now sitteth at the right hand of God to make Intercession for us. But here we must remember that Forgiveness is promised upon two express Conditions: the one is that we truly repent of our Sins; and the other, that we forgive them that sin against us: *forgive us our trespasses, as, or in the same degree*  
as

as, *we forgive them that trespass against us*: There are no two things in all the scriptures declared with more clearness, with more force; and, I might add, more frequently than these are: as to the first of them, St. Luke says; *except ye repent ye shall all perish*: and as to the other, hear what your Savior says, in the Parable of the unforgiving Servant; *O thou wicked Servant I forgave thee all thy debt because thou desiredst me, shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow Servant, even as I had pity on thee? as he had not, his Lord ordered him to be delivered to the Tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him*: and lest we should misapply, or misunderstand the Parable, he explains it to us; *so likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his Brother their trespasses*.

Of this we are reminded whenever we repeat this Petition: nay more, we acknowledge the justice, and the rectitude of it, and beg to be forgiven on this very Condition: to offer up this Petition therefore, while in our hearts we treasure up Hatred, and a desire of Revenge, is the greatest insult we can offer to God; it is telling him, either that he knoweth not what passes within us: or that we pay no regard to what he hath been pleased to notify: to offer it up, under these circumstances, is  
effectually

effectually to prevent the very good we pray for; we desire at the same time not to be heard—nay, it is worse; it is in effect praying that we may not be forgiven. If therefore, for I cannot conclude this better, thou bring thy gift to the Altar, if either at Church, or in thy Closet, thou wouldest offer up the Lord's Prayer, *and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee, go thy way, firſt to be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come, and offer thy Prayer.*

But to proceed. *Lead us not into Temptation.* How much we are expoſed to Temptation, how much we are ſolicited by evil and corrupt affections within; and by cuſtom, faſhion, habit, and ſeducements from without; we know by ſad experience. We know too that our enemy is vigilant, that he *walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour, and like a Lion lurketh in thieviſh places to murder the innocent*; we know alſo our Inability to withſtand him: many give themſelves no pains to do it, few of us take much: but ſuppoſe we did, we are not ſufficient of ourſelves, our ſufficiency is of God: and therefore to him muſt we pray, that *we may be able to ſtand in the evil day, and having done all to ſtand*: that he would put upon us his whole armour; reflection, fortitude, prudence,

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temperance, virtue, and piety, *the Breastplate of Righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit*. If we do this, he will hear us, he hath promised, to our unspeakable comfort, that if we resist the Devil, he shall flee from us; and altho' he suffers us for good and wise reasons to be tempted, it shall not be above that we are able to bear, but with the temptation he will also make a way to escape : At all times therefore, and especially when we find ourselves wavering, should we pray as we are here directed, *lead us not into Temptation*; that is suffer us not to be led into it, for God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth he any man; but he may, and doth, permit others, and especially our own hearts, to do it; and will, till we beg of him not to permit it. Whenever therefore we say lead us not into temptation, we mean, do not judiciously, and in anger, give us up to the Power of it.

*But deliver us from Evil.* That is whenever we are tempted, let it be for our good, and not to our destruction; let it be to approve us resolute in God's service, determined to oppose the World, the Flesh and the Devil, rather than him; to sacrifice the seeming pleasures, and little interests of the world, to his service; to fight a good fight, to finish our course, and obtain the Prize :  
in

in short to come out like silver, purified in the Fire, the brighter for every Trial.

This we mean, or should mean, whenever we repeat this Petition; and we mean further that God would deliver us from Pain, from Afflictions, cruel Trials, and from evil in general; but above all from the greatest, and most fatal of them, the evil of Sin at present; and the certain unavoidable Punishment that, without Repentance, will succeed it hereafter.

These are the things we are directed by this form to pray for: but as *prayer* is the consequence of want, so *praise* is the consequence of our want being supplied. And therefore as every one of us, in some shape or other receive every hour of our life many blessings from God, we should every hour add to these our petitions the tribute of our gratefullest praise. And indeed it is meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should at all times, and in all places give thanks unto thee O Lord, holy Father, almighty everlasting God! Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of Heaven: we laud and magnifie thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying, holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee O

*Lord most high! we praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty: and both in this present state, and in that, which through thee, we hope to inherit, thine be the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever<sup>1</sup>.*

Thus then I have gone through the several petitions in the Lord's prayer; at the End of which, as well as of the rest of our prayers, we say *Amen*; by which we conclude our requests, not only with a desire to be heard, but to shew further that what comes thus from our Lips, comes first from our Hearts; that we have well considered what we are asking, and are serious in it. To expatiate on the excellency of the composition; it's propriety and perspicuity; it's brevity, and yet it's comprehensiveness; it's benevolence, and great usefulness; is scarcely to be attempted. I will therefore rather beg of you to use it frequently, at least to use it Morning and Evening; you cannot begin, nor end the day better, you could not finish Life so well.

To encourage to it I need only add “ that  
 “ the eternal Son of God who was acquainted  
 “ both with our infirmities, and with their  
 “ Cure; who knew both what our condition  
 “ prompts us to ask, and what his Father is  
 willing

“ willing to grant; *He* by whose merits we  
“ are redeemed, and through whose name  
“ only we can expect to be saved, hath  
“ taught us *thus* to pray: and since we  
“ offer up this prayer by his direction, we  
“ may rest assured it will be accepted through  
“ his intercession. ”

LECTURE Sixth.

## LECTURE Sixth.

I Am now brought to the conclusion of the church Catechism: have explained the *christian Covenant*, the *christian Faith*, the *christian Duties*, and the *christian Prayer*. In short you have had a summary view of the doctrines of our religion, and have nothing left but to consider the two *principal ordinances* of it. These you have set down in the answer to this question- *How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his church?* Two only <sup>a</sup>.

The Jewish dispensation was loaded with innumerable Rites, -and Ceremonies, and imposed a Yoke which neither the later Jews, nor their Fathers, were able to bear: but our blessed Savior has relieved us from it, exchanged it for an easy, and light burthen, and instead of many principal ordinances, has commanded but *Two*. These are Baptism, and the Lord's Supper<sup>b</sup>. Both these are *Sacraments*; and in order to consider, and understand them as such, it is necessary to enquire what is their nature; or, in other words, what does properly constitute

constitute a *Sacrament*, in preference to *Rites of an inferior rank*.

But before I proceed to this, I judge it necessary to make one or two observations. The first is, that these are said to be *generally necessary to salvation*: they are *generally* necessary to salvation, but not *absolutely* necessary<sup>c</sup>, that is they are such duties as must not be neglected, unless on account of very great, and insuperable obstructions; one of these is having no opportunity; as for instance where a Child dies before its Parents have it in their power to get it baptised: to suppose such a child to be an object of divine wrath when it was never capable of wilful transgression, is to think most unworthily of the father of mercies: but to be an *Object of Wrath* is one thing, and to be an *Object of Favour* is another. Every child, born of the seed of Adam, is under the original sentence of Death, pronounced, in consequence of his transgression, on all his descendants: this sentence God engages to reverse, and to restore the party to Immortality, upon his entering into covenant with him in *Baptism*; but he engages for it *on no other terms*. For this reason all parents should take care to lose no opportunity to have this Sacrament administered: we do not say that for want of it God will not of meer grace and favour restore

store the Infant to Life; but strict justice doth not require it: and if the benefit be lost to the Infant, it is the Parent's fault. Can they answer this to their Child? can they answer it to their Consciences? and will it not rise up against them at the day of Judgment?

So also for the *Lord's Supper*. This too is generally necessary to salvation; but it is not so, where we are situated either in a place where it is not administered at all, as in *heathen* Countries; or where it is so administered that we cannot communicate without Idolatry; and this is the case in all *Papists*. Or lastly in the absence of a Priest.

In all these Cases our Omission is not wilful, and consequently our Salvation not affected by it. — But where there are no such Impediments, all besides, which we substitute for them, the Business of our several callings, the want of preparation, and the like, are meer wilful evasions, meer excuses, and subterfuges, which add to our Condemnation, instead of preventing it.

The next observation I would make is that when we answer *Two only*, we declare our dissent from those who make the number of Sacraments greater, or less, than *Two*. These are the *Quakers*, and the *Papists*; the first  
of

of which allow of *no Sacraments at all*; and the other maintain there are *Seven*.

That both these are wrong will appear when we explain the next Question: *what meanest thou by the word Sacrament?* the answer is, *I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof.*

Before we proceed it is necessary to premise that there is a great difference between *Sacraments*, and *other Rites*. Other Rites are badges of our Profession, but a Sacrament is something more. In the old Testament, Circumcision, and propitiatory Sacrifices were of a different nature and order from the other ritual precepts of Cleanings, Distinction of Days, Places, and Meats. These were indeed Precepts given them by God, and therefore to be observed; but they were not *federal* acts, and therefore are subordinate to them; but Sacraments are *federal* Acts, and therefore of a different nature from Rites that are not so<sup>d</sup>.

We go on then: to constitute a Sacrament, there must be *an Institution of Christ, in which some material thing is sanctified by the use of*  
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*Some form, or words, in, and by which, fæderal Acts do pass on both sides.*

*Matter* is necessary to a Sacrament; for words, without this, may be of the nature of Prayers, or Vows, but cannot be Sacraments: Other acts of worship are only acts of the mind declared by words, or gestures; but Sacraments are the application of a material sign, joined with the acts of the Mind, words, and gestures— Another requisite is *a Form*; that is, such words joined with it as do appropriate *the Matter to a particular use*: and lastly *this use must be fæderal*.

This is the best description of a Sacrament that I can give you. Apply it in the first place to *Baptism*; and then to *the Lord's supper*.

*In Baptism*, there is an *Institution*; go and teach all Nations, baptizing them: there is *Matter*, the Water: there is a *Form*, the person dipped or washed. — There are *Words*, I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And it is a *Covenant*, between God, and him,

In the *Lord's Supper*, there is an *Institution*: do this in remembrance of me.  
there

there is *Matter*, the Bread and Wine: there is a *Form*, the eating bread, and drinking wine.— There are *Words*, take, eat, this is my Body; and drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood. And it is a *federal Act*; ye do hereby shew the Lord's Death 'till he come— my Body which is given for you; my Blood which is shed for you, and for many, for the Remission of Sins.

Apply this to Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Marriage, and extreme Unction, and it will hold good in none of them. So that we do right when, in contradiction to the *Quakers*, we say there are *Two Sacraments*; and in contradiction to the *Church of Rome*, that there are but two.

Our notions of a Sacrament being thus rightly stated, I proceed to shew First, of what parts a true Sacrament consists. These are two; *The outward visible Sign, and the inward Spiritual Grace* <sup>t</sup>. the outward visible sign in the sacrament of Baptism is *the Water wherein the person is Baptized* <sup>g</sup>. The outward visible sign in the Lord's Supper is *the Bread and Wine* <sup>h</sup>. The inward and spiritual Grace in Baptism, is *a Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness* <sup>i</sup>. The inward part or thing signified in the other Sacrament is *the Body and Blood of Christ* <sup>k</sup>. The benefits

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of the one is that from being objects of punishment, we are forgiven, and made the children of God<sup>l</sup>. The benefit of the other is the *strengthening and refreshing of our Souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as the natural Body is by Bread and Wine<sup>m</sup>*. This shews the popish Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, to be absurd: and that when we mention the *Body and Blood of Christ*, as *verily and indeed taken, and received by the faithful, in the Lord's Supper*; we do not mean that they eat the identical body and blood of Christ, but that they are intitled to the benefits purchased for us by his Death.

This being explained, I proceed to shew secondly, *How, or in what manner they operate: and then, what is to be done previously to them,*

As to the first of these, little will suffice. They do not operate as *physical qualities*; nor by way of *Charms*: for the intention of both of them is to bring us to righteousness: but if meerly being baptized, or receiving the Lord's Supper, be sufficient, without any thing before, at, or after it, this intention is frustrated; nay the very reverse would take place: for who needs be careful to preserve a good conscience, or disquieted at a guilty one, if the Sacraments can save him, let him act as he will? The Scriptures give a very different

different account. *St. Peter* says that *Baptism* saves us; how? not as it is an action that washes us; not because it putteth away the Filth of the Flesh; but because it is the answer of a good conscience towards God. It is the same with regard to the *Lord's Supper*; by thus shewing forth the *Lord's Death* till he come, we are admitted to the *Communion of his Body and Blood*; that is, to a share, in partnership with other Christians, in the Effects and Merits of his Death.—But was it thus with *Judas*? Is it thus with any other unworthy receiver? No, *St. Paul* tells us he is guilty of the *Body and Blood of Christ*; that he eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, and must expect, in consequence of it, to be weak, and sickly, and perhaps to die before his time.

This plainly shews that we must cooperate with them: they are the outward visible Signs of an inward, and spiritual Grace; and ordained by *Christ* as the Means by which we receive this Grace; but they are also federal, and at the same time they are pledges to assure us of it, suppose us to perform the conditions on our part, as God performs his.

This being explained I come next to set before you what is required of those who come to them. And first for *Baptism*, what is required of persons to be baptized?  
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*the answer is, Repentance, whereby they forsake Sin; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament. You see that both Repentance, and Faith are required °.*

In what *Repentance* consists was explained in the First lecture, where I treated of our part of the Covenant; *that we will renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh*: and set before you what it is to renounce them. The *Faith* too, which is here required, was considered in the second, in what I said concerning *the Articles of the Christian Faith*. These, rightly understood, and attended to, leave us no Room to doubt or mistrust the promises of God made to us in Baptism. And therefore nothing remains but to answer the next Question. *Why then are Infants baptized when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them*; that is, cannot perform either Repentance or Faith. The answer is, *because they promise them both by their sureties; which promise when they come to age themselves are bound to perform*. They are bound to perform them, as I told you in the first lecture, because the things promised in their names are duties of eternal and immutable obligation; and such as they must needs perform at a riper age  
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whether any such promise had, or had not, been made for them in their Infancy.

The next Question is, and it is the last I shall have occasion to speak to, *what is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?* whoever observes on what passes within him, must be sensible that we are deceived in nothing, and by nothing more than our own selves: we are apt to forget those Actions of our Lives which we know to be criminal; and again we are apt to think others innocent, which are far otherwise. Farther if neither of these be the Case, we seldom give ourselves the trouble to enquire, or think at all about them. The Consequence of this is that we approach the holy Table without a wedding Garment; eat and drink the Lord's Body without duly considering it, and so turn the greatest of all spiritual blessings into a snare, and condemnation. The Catechism therefore tells us that it is required that we examine our selves, and so doth St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians, whose irregular and indecent behavior at the Sacrament he had been reprovng; *let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that Cup.*

But we are further told what should be the particular Heads of this self-examination: and the

the first of these is, *whether we repent us truly of our former Sins.* That is, whether we have so far recollected them, and dwelt upon the malignity of them, their offensiveness to God, and good men, and the hurt and injury they have done to our Souls; as to feel an hearty sorrow, and contrition; and are ashamed of ourselves for having committed them. For till this be the effect of our examination, it profits us nothing.

The next is, *whether we stedfastly purpose to lead a new Life?* Meer Sorrow for sin, and unless it be accompanied with resolutions not to repeat it, may perhaps deceive ourselves for a while; but it cannot deceive long: if it be genuine, it will not stop here: by its fruits we must know it: it will set out with good resolutions, proceed to good works, *following the commandments of God, and walking from thenceforth in his holy ways.*

Another is, *whether we have a lively faith in God's mercy thro' Christ?* Nothing is more expressly declared in holy Scripture, than that we are redeemed by the merits and intercession of Christ: *this is the only name under heaven by which we can be saved.* God so loved the world, saith St. John, that he gave his only begotten Son, that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life;  
and

and again, *if any man shall we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.* This therefore we must firmly believe, and happy are we in believing it.

But this is not all. *We are to have a thankful remembrance of his Death*—This naturally follows the other: for who can think of what our blessed Savior hath done, and suffered for us, and not be filled with gratitude? who can recollect his Death, and not remember that eternal Life and happiness which he thereby purchased for us? and who again can think of it seriously, and not triumph in this, that *as we are planted in the likeness of his Death, we shall be planted also in the likeness of his Resurrection.*

And now comes the last thing required of them who come to the Lord's Supper; *to be in charity with all men.* To approach the Lord's Table with an heart unforgiving, is sure to meet with the rebuke which we find in the parable, *friend how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?* we here meet to acknowledge the greatest act of mercy the world ever received, the forgiveness of sins; the greatest instance of love that could be exemplified; the Son of God laying down his Life for our sakes. These are the happy subjects of

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our meditations, and praises; to these are we invited; and in these we perform an acceptable service: but it is on this express condition, *that we have love one to another*. To be in charity with all men, requires of us more; it requires of us not to circumscribe our charity within the narrow bounds of affinity, neighbourhood persuasion, or party; but to let it be, like our Savior's, universal.

It requires too, that as all mankind are objects of our charity, so this charity should extend to our wishes, and prayers; not confined to the hand, but seated in our heart, and affections: that we do all the good to others we possibly can; and never think evil of any one: that we form no rash judgements of other men's actions, nor represent them with illnature: that we conceive the best we can of all men, and pry into no one's defects but our own: that we relieve the necessitous, console the afflicted, and help the distressed: always remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, *it is more blessed to give, than to receive* &c.

I have now gone through the Church Catechism, and have, I hope, enabled you to explain it to others. Remember therefore the words of the Apostle; *freely ye have received, freely give*. Remember also that every Soul which perisheth through your neglect, will be  
required

required at your hands. The parent who suffers his child to continue in ignorance, when he might instruct him, will answer for the consequences of that Ignorance; and how soon, and how luxuriantly, ill weeds spring, where the Ground is not cultivated, you all know: *Train up a Child in the way it should go, and when it is old, it will not depart from it:* let it be neglected in its earlier years, and it will as long retain Vice. Young minds are like wax, capable of any impression; susceptible alike of good, or bad.—Begin betimes then, and prevent at first, what you can never after efface: be but half as careful to provide for their *Spiritual* Interest, as you are to accumulate wealth, and other *temporal* goods; and you will save yourselves, and them. Sedulously enough ye rise up early, and but late take rest; no Toil fatigues you, no Labour is too great, so you can but leave them rich: but what are these Treasures upon Earth? *the Moth, and the Rust corrupts them, Thieves break through, and steal them.* Or supposing them to stay with you, will they ease a pain of mind? will they stop a sigh? they may prevent cold, and nakedness; they may assist a distemper'd Body, but will they speak peace to the Soul? will they still the tumults there? will they banish Fear, and Dread, and Guilt? No, without Virtue and Religion

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they are nothing: one good principle you shall infill into your Child, is worth them all. This is a Treasure like the widow's Cruife; this will never fail. Imagine him on a Death-Bed, and then see, if he will not thank you more for taking care of his morals, than for all you have done for him besides? and judge you yourselves, whether it will not give you more joy to see him die a good Christian, than to live in riches, and splendour, but in a course of wickedness, that must end in horrid Presages, and, without repentance, misery eternal

But if yet you wish to leave him possessed of the good things of this Life, (for so it seems we must call them,) have you not much more Reason to hope for their continuing with him if he be virtuous, than if he be otherwise? A good man will not spend more than he can afford, because that is hurting others; a good man is out of the way of many temptations, to which the irreligious are for ever exposed; and as sin is ever attended with great expences, scarce any share of worldly acquisitions will be adequate to them: but it is not thus with good men, and they have a much better security yet; they have the blessing of God upon them, so that *the Sun shall not hurt them by Day, neither the Moon by night.*

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Nor will these effects of your care extend only to your children, they will deliver down the same precepts to theirs; they will take the same care of these, that you took of them: they, and you too, will find your reward in it; and perhaps the best, and greatest that can be; not the pleasure of a day, or a year, or a life only; but the rewards of those *who turn many to righteousness*. Hereafter ye will shine as the Stars in the Firmament: at present you have the satisfaction to think, that you have done your duty to them; that you leave them instructed to do theirs by others; that you are hastening to a land of peace and happiness, and that **THEY SHALL SHORTLY FOLLOW.**

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## MODE OF EXAMINATION;

### LECTURE First.

- a.* { What is your name?  
How many names have you?  
When had you your firname?  
When had you your christian name?
- b.* Why do you call it your christian name?
- c.* What should your christian name remind you of?
- d.* Who gave you this name, and when did they give it;
- e.* What benefits did you gain by being baptized?
- f.* What is it to be a member of Christ?
- g.* What

- g. What duties are expected from you in return for this benefit?
- h. What is it to be a child of God?
- i. What duties &c. as before?
- k. What is it to be an inheritor of the kingdom of God?
- l. What duties &c. as before?
- m. What did your godfathers and godmothers do for you in baptism?
- n. { What mean you by the Devil, and all his works?  
What by the pomps and vanities of the world?  
What by the sinful lust of the flesh?
- o. What is the second thing they promised for you?
- p. What is the third?
- q. How long are you to observe and do them?

- [illegible]

## LECTURE Second.

- # O LECTURE

### LECTURE Third.

- a. How many commandments are there, and where do you find them?
- b. In what form were they originally delivered; and to whom?
- c. 

{	How many of them relate to God, and which are they?
	How many to your neighbour, and which are they?
- d. What is the first Commandment, and what doth it teach?
- e. What is the second, and what is its intention?
- f. What is the third, and what &c. as before
- g. What is the fourth &c.
- h. On what day of the week is the Jewish Sabbath? and what did they commemorate in it?
- i. On what day of the week is the Christian Sabbath, and what do we commemorate in it?

LECTURE

## LECTURE Fourth,

- a. What is the fifth Commandment?
- b. What is the sixth?
- c. What is the Seventh?
- d. What is the eighth?
- e. What is the ninth?
- f. What is the tenth?
- g. The first four set forth your duty to God:  
What is it?
- h. The six last describe your duty to your  
Neighbour. What is it?

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## LECTURE Fifth.

- a. Why do you call it the Lord's Prayer?**

**LECTURE Sixth.**

- a.* How many Sacraments are there?
- b.* Which are they?
- c.* Are they necessary to salvation?
- d.* Wherein do they differ from other rites?
- e.* How do you define a Sacrament?
- f.* Of how many parts does a Sacrament consist?
- g.* What is the outward form in Baptism?
- h.* What is the outward form in the Lord's Supper?
- i.* What is the inward and spiritual grace in Baptism?
- k.* What is it in the other Sacrament?
- l.* What benefits do we receive from being baptized?

*m.* What

- m. What are the benefits we receive from the Lord's Supper?
- n. How do the sacraments operate?
- o. What is required of Persons previous to their being baptized?
- p. What do you mean by *Both*?
- q. What is required of them who purpose to receive the Lord's Supper?

*N. B.* These questions are not to be put always in the *Course* in which they here stand, nor in the same *Words*; for otherwise the evil will remain which is hereby intended to be remedied: but this must be left to the discretion of the *Catechist*.

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## LECTURE ON CONFIRMATION.

**H**AVING explained the *Church Catechism* so as I hope to enable every parent not only to understand it himself, but so also that he may make his Children understand it, I think it may be useful to give you some instructions relative to *confirmation*. And here I think it is necessary to set before you the four following things, first the nature and design of Confirmation. Secondly the reasonableness, and utility of it. Thirdly who are the proper candidates for it, and lastly how they are to behave BEFORE, AT, and AFTER IT.

But before I proceed to the first of these it will not be amiss to premise that, altho' in what follows I am to address myself chiefly to *young* persons, they are not the only ones I am concerned with. Many of you are Parents, many of you are God-fathers, masters, or guardians: it is your duty therefore to assist me in mine; and it is for that

that purpose, among others, I lay this before you; that ye may not plead ignorance as an excuse for idleness; or suppose you are discharged from the care of them, at least 'till they have discharged you.

When it is they discharge you is more difficult to say than you may imagine: for the Church gives it in Charge to every Sponsor *that he take care that the Child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him.* But more than this is intended; it is expected that as he first prepares him for Confirmation, and then sees him confirmed, so he be a witness against him if in future he doth not perform his Engagements, and remind him of them upon every gross Failure.

This being premised I proceed to enquire what is the nature and design of confirmation.

This I think may be explained in some such easy manner as this. By the Transgression of our first Parents, which is recorded in the Book of *Moses*, called *Genesis*, all their Descendants forfeited that Immortality which God intended for them, and became miserable, and short lived Beings, that were to eat their Bread in their sweat of their

their Brow for a few years, and then sink into their Graves, and never after exist.

From this dreadful state they were redeemed by the blessed Son of God, who after taking upon himself to satisfy his offended Father, as he did by being born of a Woman, and dying on a Cross, admitted them to a *Covenant of Reconciliation* with him by *Baptism*.

In this Covenant certain things are agreed to on *both sides*. God, on his part vouchsafes to adopt us *as members of Christ, as the Children of God, and inheritors of his Kingdom of Heaven*. We on our Part promise that we will renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinfull lusts of the Flesh: that we will believe all the articles of the Christian Faith, and that we will keep God's holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same unto our Life's end.

This is the Covenant betwixt God and us; and because, at the time of our being baptized, we are unable to understand what passes on either side; our Godfathers and Godmothers do, by way of guardians, and sureties, engage for us, and in our names promise that we shall perform what belongs  
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to us. This is all the security we can give at present : but when we come to years of discretion, the Church expects of us that we should publicly declare, that we do now give our free and voluntary consent to what was done, and engaged for, in our names at Baptism : that is, that now we can discern between good and evil ; and that the things, which our sponsors undertook for us, are for our advantage, and such as it had been our duty to do, whether they had promised we should, or not ; we do solemnly ratify, and take upon ourselves to perform them. Namely *that we will renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh : that we will believe all the articles of the Christian faith ; and that we will keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our Life.*

This is what is meant by being confirmed : and it is done in the presence of the Bishop, who after the example of the Apostles ( as you will see from several passages of the new Testament, such as Acts, 8. v. 17. and Acts, 19. v. 6.) adds to his solemn benediction the *Imposition of Hands.*

The better to encourage you, you who either by nature, your engagements at the font  
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in the character of sponsors; or you whose Duty it is to prepare the youth for this rite from the Relation you bear to them as Masters, or Guardians; I recommend in the second place to consider the great *Utility* of Confirmation.

Now little as this is regarded, it will upon a fair examination appear to be one of the most useful rites of our Church: and, instead of the contempt with which it is by many received, to deserve their esteem, and attention.

For can you conceive any thing of greater utility than for young persons, just arrived at that age, when their temptations are many, and their forces but weak; when they are to encounter the world, and have had little experience of it; to be fortified with religious principles, and pre-engaged in the cause of Virtue?— The way to this, is to make them recollect their baptismal covenant, and give their personal security for the performance of it. Now perhaps the best, and greatest they can give, is their public, avowed profession to observe, and fulfill it, declared in the sight of God, and his Church; and encouraged by the hopes of divine assistance therein from the Prayers of the Bishop, and others present.

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*The Church of England* in requiring this of young persons is by no means singular. *Buxtorf* tells us that when the *Jewish* children arrived at the age of Thirteen, and had been taught the Law, and their Prayers, they were presented by their Parents before an holy assembly, and there solemnly took upon themselves *to observe the Law*; and were from that time to answer for their own Faults. And *Josephus* says, *they could as readily give an account of the Law, as they could answer to their Names.*

If we search further we shall find something pallel to this among Heathen nations. It was required of the *Persians*, when they came to Man's Estate, *to swear that they would despise all filthy Lucre, bodily pleasure, and vain Glory : that they would be virtuous, that they would worship the Gods, honour their Parents, speak Truth, do good, and never violate these Engagements.* It is also recorded, of the *Athenians*, that when their young men were enrolled, they bound themselves by an Oath *to observe the solemnities, and received Customs of their Country; and to reverence, and defend the Religion in which they were born.*

All this establishes the *Utility* of Confirmation, and sends us forward to enquire in

the Third Place, *who are the proper subjects of it.* And these are all such as have been baptized in their earlier years, when they were unable to understand what was doing. As for those that were baptized at a riper Age, and who in their own persons have sealed the covenant with God, I do not conceive it necessary that they be confirmed: because as confirmation is no more than a public declaration that we now undertake for ourselves, what had been undertaken for us by others; such persons as did bind themselves originally, can lay themselves under no greater obligation than they were under before: however it may not be amiss for them, and indeed for all adult christians to see others confirmed; because it will be natural for them to recollect whether they have not, in many instances, broken their vow; and if they have, privately to resolve, through the grace of God, to observe it more religiously for the time to come.

So again there are others who are under no necessity of being confirmed. I mean such as have received *the Lord's Supper*: for as this is the highest act of our religion, and presupposes the communicant, not only to have been baptized, but to have well weighed the obligations which the first Sacrament laid upon him, and also to live in an actual, and habitual performance

performance of them; for such persons to be confirmed is to return from *strong meats unto milk again*.

It is necessary to mention but one thing more, and that is the absurdity of being confirmed *more than once*: when once you take upon you the performance of your baptismal covenant, you engage for your whole Life; and if you think, by repairing to the Bishop a second time, to wipe off your transgressions during the interval between one confirmation and another, you trifle with him, and your self: these transgressions must be purged by repentance, and newness of life; and these are your only cure.

Upon the whole then, such persons as were baptized in their Infancy, have not yet received the Lord's Supper, nor been confirmed before, are the proper candidates for it: and I have nothing to add upon the subject except the *Age* of the party; for his other qualifications will follow hereafter,

The properest Age is from *fourteen to sixteen*; for at *sixteen* the Church deems us fit to receive the Lord's Supper: and I say from *fourteen*, because tho' we do now and then see a child of *twelve* or *thirteen* who by the advantage of an uncommon capacity, or by  
better

better instruction and education than falls to the lot of most children, is more serious, and better enabled to judge of this rite, than others of the same age, (and for that reason such are sometimes admitted to it) yet in general it is otherwise; and therefore the confirmation of them is better delayed: the more so, because if no opportunity for it should offer sooner, the necessity of it may be superceeded by receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

I come now in the fourth and last place to shew *what is required of the Candidates, before, at, and after confirmation.* Before confirmation, after notice of it is given, it is expedient that they repair to their Minister, and signify their intention to him; that so he may be enabled to judge of their qualifications, and assist them in their preparation. The next thing they have to do is to look over the office of confirmation, which will naturally send them back to the catechism, where they will see what their Godfathers, and Godmothers promised for them. After this they must diligently examine themselves, and see how far they have performed it; wherein they have been deficient, and in what particulars chiefly. When this is done they are by prayer, and humble application to the throne of Grace, to beg of God to forgive them what is past,  
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and assist them in their resolutions and endeavours to amend. They must sit down and consider that they are now solemnly engaging for their whole lives; and are to proceed in a course of Religion, at an age most averse to it, when they have the giddiness, and the passions of youth to contend with, and the examples of others, thoughtless, and as gay as themselves. They must remember, that on their setting out well depends their future success; and that as they qualify themselves for confirmation, they in all probability make good, or bad men. And lastly, that their happiness in this world, as well as in the next, is conditional, and rests entirely on the promise of God made to obedience; and therefore as life is uncertain, and death to be apprehended in every stage of it, they can never be sure of happiness, unless they be obedient to him from their Youth up.

Having thus explained what they must do *Before* confirmation, I go on to their behaviour *at it*. This must be *grave*, and *serious*; and it must be very *sincere*. It must be grave, and serious, because it is transacting an affair upon which their salvation, as Christians, greatly depends; and if they take due care to prepare themselves for it, they must be sensible that this act is to give a tincture, and an efficacy to all that shall follow. And therefore as they  
would

would not willingly set their hand to a writing, in which they are nearly interested, without weighing, and considering the contents of it, so neither will they, or ought they, to offer themselves to the Bishop, but with a sense of the importance of the promise they are going to make; and with steady resolutions to keep and perform it.

So again they will remember that this promise is made *publickly*. Do ye here, says the Bishop, *in the presence of God, and of this congregation &c.* a most awful appeal this, and on a most awful occasion! their behaviour therefore must be very *sincere*: especially because a want of sincerity here, is not barely a want of honesty; but it is a want of regard to all that concerns them nearest: to all in short that a rational creature can think of great importance to him. It is for this, his minister examines and instructs him; it is for this, he attends, and presents him; and it is for this, he is required to perform it before the Bishop, the highest minister in the Church of Christ, and a character which every good mind must reverence.

Our next enquiry is how the candidates are to conduct themselves *after* confirmation. Soon as they retire from the Church, they should repair to their Chamber; and there return  
thanks

thanks to God, for his goodness in admitting sinful dust and ashes to a covenant with him.— Here should they beg of him to grant them of his grace Power to persevere in their resolutions, and that they may continue in an uniform course of obedience to his will, belief of his word, and a religious observance of his ordinances. When they have done this, let them not think the *Catechism* is no longer of use to them; it never is useless: on the contrary it is always a sensible salutary Remembrancer, and a kind of touchstone whereby they may prove the measure of their obedience, and regulate all their failures in duty.

All I have farther to mention, is, that the great end of confirmation is to prepare them for *the Lord's Supper*. It is indeed made almost an indispensible condition of our admittance to it: *none shall be admitted*, says the Rubrick, *untill such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed*. Soon therefore as they have been confirmed, they should make the work perfect by qualifying themselves for that sacrament. The best qualification is an habitual good Life; but for their further instruction it is adviseable that they read some short tracts on the subject;

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\* and these I could wish may be in general such as their Minister shall recommend to them. I mention this, because an injudicious choice has misled many well disposed persons, and is one great cause that this necessary duty is so much neglected.

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\* Among others, an Essay on the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. By a Layman. London printed for J. Walter, at Homer's Head, Charing-Cross. Price bound one Shilling. And, Archbishop Synge's answer to all the Excuses and pretences which men ordinarily make for their not coming to the Holy Communion. Price three Pence.

OF THE NATURE,  
AND  
OBLIGATION OF RELIGIOUS VOWS.

Pfal. 50. v. 14.

*Pay thy vows unto the most High.*

**M**Y design from these words is to remind you of those sacred Resolutions and Promises which, at different Times, and upon different Occasions, we all of us make. But before I particularize any of them, it may not be amiss to observe, that be the thing promised evey so trifling, our word is sacred, and must not be violated: so again be the person, to whom the promise is made, ever so inconsiderable, it is nevertheless binding; it still is a promise; and if we wantonly break it, we have no longer any pretensions to honesty, or the esteem of the world.

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Now if this be so in the intercourse between one man and another, will it not be much worse in what passes between him, and his Creator? if the one be mean and dishonourable, the other is shameful, and impious; if the one deserves flight and contempt, the other deserves anger and punishment: if our promises to men are binding, much more surely are our promises to God. Yet such are all our professions of service; such are all our vows of amendment; such are all the resolutions we make in our more serious hours: and such in short is every engagement we lay ourselves under to him.

Here then surely is a field for severe Recollection, and that self-examination, which are duties at all times, especially on Sundays, and other seasons set apart for them.

I shall therefore endeavour to represent to you most of those solemn promises which at different times we all make.

The first of these is at our *Baptism*; and it is that we will renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh: that we will believe all the articles of the christian Faith; and that we will keep God's holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our Life. All ye therefore who have

have been baptized, but are not yet of age to be confirmed, who daily are instructed by your parents, and others, in what passed at your baptism, should consider whether you have done your duty, and performed this promise, as far as ye knew; and understood it; whether you love and honour those who instruct you, and are truly desirous to behave as they bid you. If you are, and endeavour to do so, God will bless you; but if ye be the children of disobedience, you will also be the children of wrath. These things you should endeavour to keep in memory, and your parents should frequently remind you of them.

The next we make is at being *Confirmed*. In this sacred rite we do *in the presence of God, and the Congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made at our Baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in our own persons, and acknowledging ourselves bound to believe, and to do all those things which our godfathers, and godmothers then undertook for us.* This promise we make before the Bishop, in the house of God, and accompany it with devout prostration, and prayer. Does it not therefore behove all of us, and especially such as have been lately confirmed, to take a review of our behaviour from that time to this; whether we have pursued the instructions given us upon the occasion, and carried into execution the resolutions

resolutions we so solemnly made. None, it is to be hoped, offered themselves to the Bishop without very serious intentions to answer the designs of his coming, but I must now tell them, what they must acknowledge I did then tell them, that one great end of confirmation is to prepare, and lead them on to the holy Sacrament: and as this is frequently administered, and they have, in the course of one year, many opportunities to receive it, their neglect is wilful, and therefore highly sinful.

But to proceed. In this great and necessary act of religion, we do, if possible, lay ourselves under still greater obligations to holiness: for what do we when we receive *the Lord's Supper*, but offer and present ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto God? Do we mean nothing when we say this? are we not supposed, nay do we not suppose ourselves, to be serious, and in earnest in it? and if we are, will it not operate on our conduct after it? ought it not to operate on it? and if it does not, are we not found liars unto God?

But to proceed. Besides these grand times for engaging ourselves to perform the duties of our religion, there are many others when we renew our professions: and among these none occur to me sooner than *our hours of devotion*. When these are *private*, as in our Closet, in our

our retired Walk, or our Bed, it is impossible not to see when we offend, and against whom we offend; it is also impossible not to feel compunction for our sins, thankfulness for his forbearance, and a fear of forfeiting this for want of amendment. Here let every man ask himself, how often have I resolved upon an alteration of conduct? how often have I solemnly promised it? and if I have solemnly promised it, how dare I then not set about it? Has God no knowledge? can I impose upon him? are all my repeated tenders of service of no obligation? will this service not be expected; and if longer delayed will it not be deemed mockery?

Next to our devotions *in private*, we come to what passes when we pay them *in public*. Our services here consist of four parts: confession of sins, supplication for mercy, thanksgiving for good things received, and professed resolutions and vows of obedience. Duties these not confined to the *Church*, for they all may be, and we trust are, performed in the *Closet*: But come they not here with an additional gravity? if they be mockery, the mockery is the greater for being so solemn. Let every man therefore consider What he promises here: let him recollect when he joins in the service, and in those useful intervals that give us pause for reflection, what resolutions

tions he makes; when with his mouth he confesses his sin, how his Soul vows to forsake it: when we acknowledge the wrath of God against hypocrites, that he will be sincere, and without affectation: when he hears of his purity, that he will be pure: when he is recounting his mercies, that he will shew mercy: and when he is imploring forgiveness, that he will forgive! I say it is impossible to join in our *Liturgy*, and not be awakened to good resolutions. who, for instance, can call God his Father, and forget the honour due to him from that relation? who can address him in Heaven, and not in heart thither ascend? who can call him his judge, and not tremble at his future account? who can offer up his prayers thro' the merits and intercessions of Christ, and forget the duties which he owes to his redeemer? and who can be reminded of any of these particulars, without suitable reflections, and resolutions?

But suppose these to fail, and a soul so benumbed as to slide through the prayers without them, there are certain pauses, and seasons when they will make their way to us. In the *Psalms*, and in the *Lessons*, we see it done in the person of others, and tho' besotted enough to be secure for a while, shall by and by be awaked by *example*. To these I may add those serious Mementos and Incitements  
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which are offered from the *Pulpit*: strange, if a sermon strikes not some string or other! But be this as it may, by whatever means we are led to right reflections, and resolutions, they are so many promises made to the Almighty, and as such will be required at our hands.

What I have observed will hold true whenever we come to Church, and join in the ordinary services of it. More still do our Minds and Consciences operate when, as I said above, we receive the *Lord's Supper*. I mean when we conceive aright of the institution, and consider it as it is, *a thankful Remembrance of the death, and passion of Christ, and a solemn profession of love and union with all his members*. I say whoever receives the Sacrament with this idea on his mind, cannot fail to vow the greatest gratitude to his crucified Savior, obedience to his Laws, and forgiveness and benevolence to all whom he died for.

Consider this ye, who in spite of these sacred engagements indulge yourselves in implacable hatreds, in malicious opinions, and misrepresentations; in discord, and variance; in anger and clamour, in censoriousness, and hateful ill-will: who instead of rejoicing with them who rejoice, and weeping with them that weep, are unaffected with others misfortunes,

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and perhaps contributors to them; who shut up your bowels of compassion, and see a Brother have need. Consider this ye who, altho' ye appear thankfully to commemorate the death of Christ, crucify him afresh with your sins; and while you hypocritically confess him with your mouth, in facts deny him. Consider it ye, who by not attending to the motions of your own hearts at the Sacrament, or any other religious duty, whether such as ye perform in your Closet, or in the Church, do as the *Jews* did by *their Traditions*; *make the promises of God of none effect to you*, because you keep not your's.

But besides the opportunities for *private devotion* which every man has at every hour, besides the opportunities for *public*, which are, or should be, frequent in every parish; besides the Sacrament, which in all is administered at least three times in every year; there are other seasons when you are particularly called upon to recollect, and amend your lives. Such is the *Sabbath Day*; and such is the *Fast of Lent*: a season this, set apart not indeed merely for *fasting* (for that of itself can have no merit in it) but for religious retirement and self-denial. If we observe this as we ought, not superstitiously (for whatever is superstitious can never be true Religion) but for those pious purposes for which it is retained in our Church

Church; that is, if we separate ourselves from our usual diversions, and observe a more than ordinary degree of moderation in our pastimes and pleasures; if we leave the world, and the little interests in it, to cultivate an acquaintance with God, and our own Souls; and by an extraordinary course of temperance give our faculties power to exert themselves. I say if we do this, and this it is to keep **Lent**, we shall find in ourselves a sorrow for them, and a hearty detestation of ourselves for committing them: and this sorrow, and this detestation, cannot fail to work in us sincere desires, and solemn resolutions to forsake them for the time to come.— Will it not therefore be our duty afterwards to enquire how far we have performed these promises, and whether they were vain words, or came from our heart? Ye must think it is, and if upon enquiry you find yourselves guilty, how will you be acquitted in the sight of the Almighty?—Brethren, saith an Apostle, *if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; but if that condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.* These would always set us right if we consulted them fairly: but the misfortune is, we speak peace to ourselves when there is no peace, and take as much pains to be deceived, as the great enemy of our nature does to deceive us.

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These *stated* Times of Prayer being spoken to, there are no other than those *occasional ones* which the Legislature for good and wise purposes think fit to appoint. These are usually enjoined in times of *national* danger and dread, when the judgments of God are abroad, and the sons of men should learn Righteousness. Either when we are invaded with *Epidemical* sickness, such as that which before our time, and in *London only*, swept away in one year near an hundred thousand: or when we are alarmed with horrid convulsions of the Earth, such as in our time laid *Lisbon* in ruins, and in many parts of our own kingdom threatened us. Such again as when we are *at War*; the issues of which are always uncertain, and its immediate effects bloody, and dreadful. These visitations whenever they are sent, are punishments inflicted on a sinful nation, and nothing but Reformation and Amendment in the national character can avert them from it. Here then it is the duty of every one to contribute towards this by his supplications, and prayers, his fasting and alms, but above all by *amending himself*. And it is impossible not to be serious in it when he recollects that besides the motive of charities, connections of kindred and country, all which should be dear to him, his *private* happiness must rise or fall with the *public*. For these reasons on such occasions our Churches are unusually crowded, and a general  
seriousness

seriousness, and attention to the exigencies of the times, seem to prevail. Is it not then our duty, when this first fervour begins to abate, coolly to recall what passed in our minds on these days, what compunction we felt for our sins, and what vows of amendment we made. Every one of us has some favorite fault, and such of us as are wise will make that his *Sacrifice*. But shall we not enquire whether it be not reviving? whether our abhorrence of it is as great as ever? whether we persist in our resolutions, and see things as they appeared to us then? And if on the contrary we perceive ourselves growing languid, our indignation at sin to abate, and the convert already wavering on the brink of a relapse; ought we not to take the alarm? ought we not to consider what it is to trifle with God? *Is this a Fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? is it to bow down the head like a bullrush, and to spread sackcloth, and ashes under us?* Is it even to confess, and lament our sins for *one day only*? no, if that one day has not its due effect upon those that succeed it; if it doth not lay a foundation for righteousness all our Lives after; our prayers, and our fasting, were all farce and hypocrisy: and instead of those salutary ends they were designed to produce, instead of averting the judgements of God from us, and our posterity, are the readiest means to bring them down upon both.

Hitherto

Hitherto my observations have been confined to what passes at our *formal devotions*. But there are other times when we are apt to make promises, and afterwards as apt to neglect them. These are first in *prosperous fortune*. It is much to be feared that some men enjoy an uninterrupted course of it for many years together without ever looking up to the gracious Author and Giver of it: to men thus besotted and ~~ungateful~~, I am not now speaking, but to those who willingly acknowledge that all they have and enjoy is owing to God's good providence: such men as these cannot help being struck with gratitude, especially when they see others, who appear to deserve as much as themselves, sinking under grievous afflictions: The mind naturally breaks forth into acknowledgements, and in secret resolves to make all possible returns of praise, and obedience. What shall we say then, if the same men afterwards ascribe them to their own address, or industry; or instead of employing them to the honour of God, and the benefit of their fellow creatures, make them subservient to the purposes of Oppression, and Lust? if instead of communicating, they engross them; and instead of being the better men for them, are so much the worse? if they presume upon their present prosperity, and cry out *I shall never be removed?* yet this is the case with many or most of

of mankind, and is one instance among others where we forget our solemnest vows, and to our everlasting undoing, insult the Almighty.

A second very interesting period is *when we are surrounded with calamities*. This is a season when the mind, free from that dissipation and levity that attend on more fortunate hours, is attentive, and thoughtful. He who in an happier state could not see the indulgence of providence, readily acknowledges the correcting hand of it: he knows in the hands of God *are the Issues of Life and Death*; of good and evil: and persuaded as he must be, that he, who made the wound, alone can bind it up; he betakes him to confession and prayer; calls his past ways to remembrance, renews his former vows of amendment, and, till the present storm is blown over, is a new, and a much better man. Strange, that at the first dawn of happiness, all these impressions wear off! yet thus it is with most of us; few have the gratitude to think, and to say with the Psalmist, *I will go into thine house with burnt offerings, and will pay thee the vows which I promised with my lips, and spake with my mouth when I was in trouble*. And yet for all these violations of plighted obedience God will call us to judgment: How we can expect to be heard when in future distress we recur to the same means for succour; how

how we can depend upon that forbearance we have so much abused; or how indeed trust ourselves and our own resolutions, are matters I cannot conceive. Sure I am, that the oftner we make it necessary to repeat these, the more we shall stand in need of them; and perhaps, because we shall stand in need of them, they shall profit us little.

The same may be said of our professions in *Health*, and in *Sickness*; but as these may be included in *Prosperity* and *Adversity*, I here purposely wave them: but not till I have first entreated you to recollect the solemn vows of amendment ye have made when at any time ye have thought yourselves in danger of dying; when your Soul seemed to meditate a flight, and every thing here to be retiring. The same vows have ye made, when ye have thought yourselves recovering from the Gates of Death: what vows of sobriety, and temperance! what acknowledgements of God's mercies, and favours! what resolutions to secure an interest in him in case of a second attack! yet all this, it may be, lasts only till our health is established, and then is laid aside till the next fit of sickness. But is this not horrible trifling? is it not immoral in the highest degree? and may we not justly expect that God will say to us *because this people*

*people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, but their heart is far from me, I also will mock at their calamity, and laugh when their fear cometh.*

The instances which have been produced are sufficient for the purpose of the present discourse, for otherwise I might proceed to shew the same inconstancy, and inconsistency in those resolutions we make, as we glide along the current of life. In each of the great Stages of it we promise to act well in the next: our Manhood shall correct the follies of Youth; and Age, like kindly Autumns, ripen the fruits of Manhood. The seasons return, and our professions return: one year succeeds to a former, and another to that; till he who intended to be a new man the *next* day, finds he has unexpectedly arrived at his *last*. Here, to his other offences, comes the accumulated guilt of numberless Resolutions to quit them, and the consciousness that he never could depend on them, sinks him to his Grave in Despair.

*Promise therefore unto the Lord and keep it, and whenever a sense of blessings received, a dread of evil to come, or any other motive disposes you to religious Reflections and Re-*

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solutions,

solutions, remember the words of the Son  
of *Sirach*, BETTER IT IS THOU  
SHOULDEST NOT VOW, THAN  
THAT THOU SHOULDEST  
VOW, AND NOT PAY.



THE END.







